



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Cloudy

(R 65P) 60p



Prunella Scales
Queen
of parts *The eye*



Caryl Phillips
Prince
of books
THE LONG WEEKEND



John Lichfield:
champagne
secrets NEWS PAGE 13

PLUS: WIN A VALENTINE WEEKEND FOR TWO IN NEW YORK *The Eye* page 67

TV viewers offered chocolate box choice

Rob Brown
Media Editor

Everyone with a television set in Britain will be able to choose from 30 channels by early next year – and all they will need is a box, about the size of a chocolate box, costing less than £200.

In the most dramatic development since the arrival of colour television in 1967, three rival consortia are competing to make the much-hyped digital revolution a practical reality for the three-quarters of the United Kingdom's population who have still not entered the multi-channel era.

The huge commercial interest shown in digital terrestrial television – which emerged shortly before noon yesterday, the Independent Television Commission deadline for digital television licences – is so strong that some media analysts are even starting to sound the death knell for satellite dishes.

But Rupert Murdoch is boxing clever as ever. The satellite giant BSkyB, in which he holds a 40 per cent stake, controls the set-top boxes crucial to both satellite and terrestrial digital. Yesterday it said that it is joining forces with the biggest existing forces in British terrestrial television, Carlton, Granada and the BBC, to mount a joint bid for three of the six digital "multiplexes" (or group of frequencies) up for grabs.

This unprecedented alliance is proposing to create a giant new grouping called British Digital Broadcasting which would offer viewers all the existing terrestrial channels, new free channels plus the choice of 15 subscription channels. The basic subscription package would include Sky One, new Carlton films and entertainment channels, Granada Plus, Sports Club, Good Life and television shopping plus Public Eye. It would also offer four al-

The digital future

■ Digital terrestrial television promises the multi-channel for the vast bulk of British viewers via rooftop aerials. Viewers do not need a satellite dish or cable.

■ A set-top decoder will cost up to £500 initially but competition could cut that to less than £200. Within two years TV sets will be sold with built-in decoders.

■ Two groups of frequencies have been awarded to the BBC and a share between ITV and Channel 4, with an art house film channel.

■ A third will be shared by Channel 5 and Welsh language channel S4C with Gaelic programmes.

ready planned BBC channels, serving up repeats and new lifestyle and music programming, plus BBC One TV, based on Radio One.

Viewers not sated by the above menu can splash out more to subscribe to a further three premium channels: Sky Movies, the Movie Channel and Sky Sports.

Unveiling the £300m venture, Carlton's chairman Michael Green enthused: "Going digital is the most important development for British television since the introduction of colour."

Mr Green forecast the end of traditional analogue television in a few years as fully integrated sets came onto the market with built-in decoders. "By bringing together Britain's three most successful commercial broadcasters and the BBC, we can play a key role in bringing about this revolution," he said.

Roy Payne of the Cable Communications Association, described BSkyB's involvement in the consortium as "interesting", commenting: "I wonder the extent to which it's an admission that there isn't a future in direct-to-home satellites."

The other major bidder to emerge yesterday Digital Television Network is claiming to be even more revolutionary. Using the same basic set-top boxes – which it says it will subsidise to create a low-entry cost – DTN, part of the American-owned NTL/CableTel group, is proposing to offer British viewers not just a batch of new channels, but also a range of interactive services such as home shopping and Internet access.

Its chief executive, Jeremy Thorp, said yesterday: "We've proposed a multimedia solution tailored to the needs of the UK mass TV audience."

Mr Thorp said he had the "perfect team" to put the British population on the information superhighway. But the team does not include Lord Hollick's United News and Media or the French pay-television channel Canal Plus, which both withdrew their expected backing at the eleventh hour.

Steve Wagner, DTN's director of marketing and subscriber management, said: "We've always believed in digital terrestrial. We know UK consumers through CableTel and we know that they aren't just looking for 200 more channels. They want quality programming and interactive services which have real value for them."

The science and technology minister Ian Taylor said the strong commercial interest gave "the lie to all the jeremiahs and the prophets of doom who said that DTT would be of no commercial interest and that digital would be monopolised by one company." The DTG is insisting that successful applicants must launch their new services by July next year at the latest.

Business, page 22
■ Granada Group is planning to close about 100 of its 560 television rental shops. The decision is likely to lead to about 2,500 job losses.



At the touch of a button something for everyone

Open wide: Digital television is set to take over the market and, by early next year, Britons will be able to channel-hop between 30 stations. Photograph: Jonathan Anstee

Only one in a hundred can't teach

Judith Judd

Fewer than 1 per cent of teachers are incompetent, less than a quarter of the figure of 15,000 originally given by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, according to figures produced by his own office.

Mr Woodhead caused a storm of protest from teachers last year when he said there were 15,000 bad teachers, about 4 per cent of the profession.

But figures sent by Mr Woodhead to Don Foster, Liberal Democrat education spokesman, suggest the number is a huge exaggeration.

Under the new inspection system demanded by the Prime Minister, under which bad teachers must be reported to heads, the percentage of lessons given the bottom grade was zero and the proportion given the grade next to the bottom was only 1 per cent.

As it is rare for a teacher to get the same grade for every lesson, the figure for bad teachers is clearly less than 1 per cent.

The figures will give ammunition to Mr Woodhead's critics who say his campaign to raise standards and attack trendy teaching have undermined the profession's morale. Others will say John Major's new system has backfired, because inspectors are reluctant to give the lowest grades now that they are required to report teachers.

The inspection results also show Mr Woodhead, whose annual report is due out next week, underestimated the number of good teachers. He put their number at only three times the figure for bad ones. Although his letter gives only the proportion of good lessons, not good teachers, the difference is clearly greater. Twelve per cent of lessons have been awarded the top two grades.

Overall, the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons between

1 April last year and 17 January was 13 per cent, well down on the 20 per cent given in Mr Woodhead's last annual report.

The new figures grade teachers on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (satisfactory), 5 (less than satisfactory), 6 (poor), 7 (very poor). Under the new system, inspectors from Mr Woodhead's Office For Standards in Education grade teachers. For the first time they are required to report the best and the worst (grades 6 and 7) to headteachers.

Mr Woodhead's letter suggest most teachers bunch together at grades 3 and 4, which account for 75 per cent of all lessons. He told Mr Foster it was not possible to give the proportion of bad and good teachers.

Mr Foster said: "Mr Woodhead has a lot of explaining to do. This seriously calls into question his statement of a year ago that there are 15,000 poor teachers. On the face of it, this is a welcome boost for the teaching profession. Given that it was possible to calculate the original 15,000 figure, it is important that he does the same analysis again and publishes the figures."

The reason for the discrepancy between the sets of figures is not clear. Headteachers have complained that inspectors are reluctant to jeopardise teachers' careers by awarding the bottom grades. Right-wingers have also complained inspectors are not tough enough on teachers.

An Ofsted spokeswoman said: "Mr Foster has confused lesson grades with judgements on teachers. The reduction in the number of lessons graded poor is from 2 per cent to 1 per cent. There are a number of reasons for this. We are currently analysing data concerning the number of very poor and very good teachers identified in the new reporting arrangements."

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Major unveils his plans for shares for the workers

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister yesterday sought to reclaim the initiative after an uncertain start to the Tory election campaign by leaking parts of his own manifesto to encourage firms to offer free shares to their workers, and personal pensions for employees of small businesses.

The first details of the Tory manifesto may have failed to fire voters' imagination, but John Major promised an "ambitious agenda" of "very eye-catching innovations" and a "stream of announcements". Hailing the plans as the core themes of the manifesto, he announced:

■ Sharematch, which involves changes in Inland Revenue rules to allow firms to offer free shares to employees who buy shares in their company;

■ Relaxation of the rules to allow companies to set up personal pension plans for groups of employees, making it cheaper for small businesses;

■ Reform of the Uniform Business Rate (UBR); and the right



to draw early on top-up pensions invested on top of company schemes.

Tory strategists, who claimed that their "tracking polls" were showing a narrower gap than the 25 per cent Labour lead reported yesterday, have persuaded Mr Major to announce the details to portray a government with ideas, to overcome an impression that it has run out of steam. The Tory lead-

ership feared it missed an opportunity to steal a march on Labour on Monday when it announced that the Cabinet had agreed the manifesto at Chequers without providing any details. In a hurriedly arranged press conference at Conservative Central Office, Mr Major sought to repair the damage.

The Tory strategy is directed at securing the "grey" vote with more self-provision through insurance schemes, even if it surrenders the youth vote.

The plans unveiled by Mr Major fall short of the "property owning democracy" hailed by Baroness Thatcher in previous elections. But he said the Halifax share conversion offer for 16 million investors was an example of the share-owning expansion he was seeking. The manifesto, he promised, would be "radical in improving people's lives" but it would "offer stability to the nation".

Alistair Darling, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, immediately attacked Mr Major for announcing untested schemes, which could lead to

more tax increases by the Tories. Echoing the Tory tax attack on Labour, Mr Darling estimated the sharematch scheme could cost £50m and reforms to the uniform business rate for small businesses could cost between £600m and £1.5 bn.

The plan to expand personal pensions was also attacked by Harriet Harman, shadow Social Security Secretary, in the wake of allegations surrounding pension-selling after the Government's drive to encourage more to opt out of state earnings related pensions in the 1980s.

The Prime Minister's first excerpts from the Tory manifesto suggest that the Government is anxious to overcome scepticism about increased wealth through ownership after the shocks to confidence caused by the collapse in house prices and the pensions debacle.

"What we're seeking to do... is to extend pension provision and the opportunity for pension provision or share ownership," Mr Major said. "It is a Conservative levelling up measure, not a levelling down measure."

QUICKLY

Brown firm on pay
Labour signalled it would enforce below-inflation pay awards to public-sector workers which the Cabinet is expected to agree next week. Page 6

Taxi to stardom
Augusto Macedo is set to become one of Portugal's biggest stars for *Taxi Lisboa*, the quirky story of a man and his Oldsmobile. He died last year, aged 93. Page 12

Jails boss apologises
Richard Tilt, the head of the Prison Service, apologised to the family of a prisoner chained to his bed while dying of cancer. He said compassion and humanity had taken a back seat. Five people face disciplinary charges. Page 5

Ratty rescued
The Government came to the rescue of Ratty, the misleadingly named water vole, and 32 other plants and creatures, including bluebells and basking sharks, which are under pressure from modern life. Page 3

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news

significant shorts

Royal Academy review board to take charge

The Royal Academy's general assembly yesterday gave its full support to the establishment of a "review board" to strengthen the efficiency of the Academy's administration and finance. The new management committee, comprising RAs, trustees and senior members of staff, was recommended by the Royal Academy's secretary David Gordon and its president Sir Philip Dowson. The institution was recently rocked by revelations of debts of more than £3m and the admission that £200,000 had not been paid into the staff pension fund.

David Lister

Family in need wins case

A local authority has announced that its social services department is to "review its procedures" after dramatically settling a landmark High Court action brought against it by a "family in need".

The London Borough of Newham admitted in a series of court declarations that it had failed in its legal duty to assess needs and provide help for a deaf young "carer", Elsie Whittingham, 14, her ill single mother Angela, and 10-year-old sister, Venetia, who is severely disabled by cerebral palsy. One of the major complaints of the family, from Beckton, east London, was a failure by the council to fulfil a promise to install a suitable shower. Unable to stand or sit, walk or talk, the disabled daughter has to be bathed in a washing-up bowl by her sister and mother.

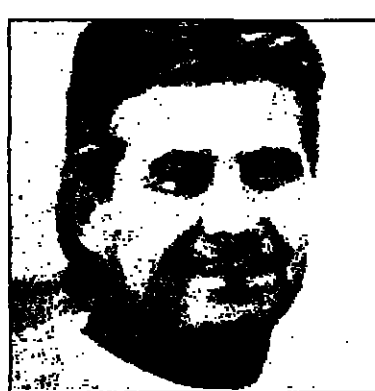
Lawyers acting for the family said the case, the first to be launched to test provisions of the 1995 Carers (Recognition and Services) Act, represented "a massive breakthrough".

1,200 jobs go to computer

About 1,200 administrative jobs are to be axed at the Home Office's immigration department – about a fifth of the workforce – and will be replaced by a computer. The new system is expected to speed up applications and help identify bogus asylum seekers and fake marriages. It is intended to produce savings of around 40 per cent. Unions oppose the cuts and say they have not ruled out industrial action as part of a campaign of opposition. They have advised members not to volunteer for redundancy.

Jason Bennetto

Man held over two murders



A man was yesterday remanded in custody accused of the murder of one woman and the attempted murder of another. Victor Farrant, 47, of no fixed abode, appeared before magistrates at Portsmouth after being extradited from France. He was charged with the murder in Portsmouth in February last year of Glenda Hoskins, 45, and the attempted murder of Ann Fidler in December 1995 at Eastleigh, Hampshire.

Jail for gun-maker

An engineer who made sub-machine guns in a factory hidden behind his garage was jailed yesterday. Denis Lindop, 48, was sentenced to 10 years for unlawful possession of 68 guns and ammunition, and given a concurrent eight-year term for the unauthorised manufacture of sub-machine guns. He admitted both charges. The cache was found when the Royal Ulster Constabulary searched Lindop's home at in Holywood, Co Down, in April 1995.

No action on custody death

The family of Wayne Douglas, whose death in custody sparked rioting in Brixton in 1995, reacted with disappointment yesterday as the Police Complaints Authority ruled out action against officers, citing insufficient evidence. The family said they would be seeking a judicial review to quash an inquest verdict that the 25-year-old burglary suspect was accidentally asphyxiated. Patricia Wynn Davies

Yvonne Paul

McLinda Messenger, the newly discovered model featured in tabloid newspapers this week, to whom we referred in yesterday's issue, is represented by the Yvonne Paul agency. We apologise for suggesting otherwise.

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BACK ISSUES
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people



Diana Rigg and David Suchet during rehearsals for 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'

Barbara Cartland steals George & Martha's show

Diana Rigg and David Suchet's performances as the warring husband and wife, George and Martha, in Edward Albee's play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in London's West End, won them a South Bank Show Award for theatre yesterday.

Receiving the award, Dame Diana voiced concern about the lack of funding for regional theatre. She recalled that she started in the regions over 30 years ago, applying for a drama school grant from Leeds Council, where she was asked: "Do you think you're going to be able to make money from it?"

Sir Peter Hall, who presented Dame Diana's award, said the financial state of regional theatre was the worst he had known. Actors were working for practically nothing, he said, and the seed-corn that should be leading the West End and major subsidised theatres would dry up if funding was not increased. Dame Rigg and David Suchet have both also been nominated for best actress and actor in the Olivier Awards in two weeks time.

Among the other arts awards presented for the first time by the LWT show, the painter Howard Hodgkin won the visual arts category, and the tenor Ian Bostridge won the classical music section. Bernard Haitink won the opera award for his conducting of Wagner's *Ring*.

Jimmy McGovern accepted best television drama award for Hillsborough, his controversial dramatisation of the football disaster. Presenting that award, the playwright Harold Pinter said: "I took the thought away from that programme that the victims of a disaster are inevitably blamed for it and become guilty."

In the popular music category the hot favourites,

Oasis, were beaten by Tricky. However, neither act attended the awards ceremony.

The literature award to Seamus Deane, for *Reading in the Dark*, was accepted by film director and friend Neil Jordan.

Dame Barbara Cartland, who was presenting rather than receiving an award, all but stole the show. Dressed in characteristic pink hat and frock, she praised the *South Bank Show* so lavishly – saying it was the one thing that made people abroad admire England – that Melvyn Bragg, its presenter, put his head in his hands in embarrassment. When he whispered to her that the award she was presenting was for the TV comedy *Father Ted*, she replied sternly and said: "I don't think I'll be taking it."

Throughout the ceremony, the Government faced a barrage of criticism. Theatre director Sir Peter Hall, Booker Prize-winner Salman Rushdie and Paine D'O'Connell, winning film director Mike Leigh slated 18 years of "disastrous arts policies".

Mike Leigh said: "I hope that the new government to which we look forward will not hide behind the quasi-support for the cinema which we have seen happening recently."

The event, at the Savoy Hotel, was rounded off by an informal speech by Tony Blair, who will outline the Labour Party's arts policies in a speech at Mansion House on Monday.

After the series of outspoken rebukes, Mr Blair said: "I thank Salman Rushdie and others for their very direct criticism, but we have to get there first."

David Lister

Could the truth be somewhere in Vancouver?

As FBI agent Dana Scully in the wildly successful television serial with the paranormal twist, *The X-Files*, actress Gillian Anderson is used to doing the sleuthing. Recently, however, she has been the object of intense investigation herself – by newspaper reporters, most of them British.

The newshounds have been camped for two weeks already in Vancouver, on the Canadian West Coast, where *The X-Files* is produced and where Ms Anderson, 28, has a home. The urgent question: who lives there with her?

It was the Sun that first broke the news that the actress was no longer enjoying marital bliss, or marital anything apparently, with her husband of three years, Clyde Klotz.

The story had legs if only because the Klotz match had always seemed odd to X-philes. The pair married on impulse on a Hawaiian golf course with help from a Buddhist priest. Not at all the kind of person favoured by the paparazzi, Mr Klotz, a film art director, was disarmingly normal and nice. The couple had a baby girl, Piper.

Then, there came more – much



Gillian Anderson: Hunted

more. Ms Anderson was alleged to have taken up with a 32-year-old Briton, Adrian Hughes. While not quite extra-terrestrial, the plot then got better still. Mr Hughes, a bit-part player in the series, was discovered to be facing charges involving alleged sexual assaults against three separate women. He will apparently face trial in April.

Any of the reporters worrying about tearing themselves away from the delights of Vancouver can console themselves with this: Mr Hughes' trial is only three months away.

David Osborne

Best denies beating his wife

A bleary-eyed George Best emerged from his home yesterday and denied reports that he had beaten his young wife, Alex, saying: "I don't hit women, only men."

The 50-year-old former football superstar also denied reports that his 25-year-old wife had gone to or called police, telling journalists that "someone else did".

The ex-Manchester United and Northern Ireland international, wearing a full-length blue raincoat and a red paisley-patterned scarf, made his brief comments as he walked from his home in Chelsea, south-west London, to his office above the Phene pub in nearby Phene Street.

Alex Best was said to have complained to police that her husband attacked her on Wednesday night after a drinking binge to celebrate her 25th birthday. Best, aged 50, was reported to police yesterday for allegedly punching her in the face leaving her badly bruised. But Mrs Best asked officers not to press charges.

The alleged incident comes after Best recently joked about hitting Alex following the allegations that Glasgow Rangers' midfielder Paul Gascoigne had hit his wife Sheryl.

briefing

DEFENCE

UK arms industry captures quarter of global market

Britain's arms industry captured a quarter of the world defence market with record sales of more than £5bn in 1996, it was announced yesterday. The defence procurement minister, James Arbutnot, described the announcement as a "remarkable achievement for British industry" boosting the country's share of the world market to an all-time record 25 per cent from 16 per cent in 1994 and 19 per cent in 1995.

The outlook for 1997 is equally good following the successful signing of a defence pact with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East.

The UAE deal alone has opened the door for companies such as British Aerospace, GEC-Marconi and shipbuilder Vespene Thornycroft to potential sales of more than £2.5bn. In the longer-term Britain sees the UAE as a potential customer for the four-nation Eurofighter.

Yesterday's figures were said to be good news for the 360,000 people who rely directly or indirectly on the defence industry for employment.



ECONOMICS

How to create 1m jobs

A million new high-quality jobs could be created using only "modest" increases in taxation or borrowing, according to academic research published yesterday. Cambridge University economists found that a large proportion of cash spent by the Government on creating jobs would be paid back in extra tax receipts and lower social security bills.

The report said that a £17bn programme, for example, would lead to savings of £10bn, leaving the Treasury with a £7bn bill. The introduction of a new 60 per cent top rate of tax, hitting at £40,000 would alone cover half of that net cost, by bringing in £4.2bn a year.

Much of the rest could come from the release of money earned over the years from selling off council homes, said the report, published in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*. It added that the majority of the new jobs should be in education, housing, the health service, care in the community and the environment.

EDUCATION

Schools squeezed by special needs

A dramatic increase in the number of pupils needing special help at school is putting severe pressure on education budgets, according to councils in London. New figures compiled by authorities in the capital reveal a 50 per cent rise over the last three years, bringing total numbers to around 25,000.

The sudden increase, the councils say, has been prompted partly by the introduction a year ago of a new code of practice for local education authorities, tightening their responsibilities on identifying and providing for pupils with special needs.

Parents have also become more aware of their children's entitlements, and are more prepared to go to a tribunal if they are dissatisfied with their LEA's assessment of their child. In addition, the opening of more specialist centres means places are now being found for children who formerly would not have been catered for.

Dame Sheila Knight, education chair of the Association of London Government, which carried out the survey, said the rise in demand was costing some boroughs an extra £3m a year just to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. She called on the Government to provide more funding to save councils from cutting other education provision.

Lucy Ward

PRISONS

Released lifers commit new crimes

Nearly 20 per cent of prisoners jailed for "life" but later released on licence committed a new offence within five years, a Home Office report reveals.

In the 22 years up to 1994, 1,691 criminals were released on "life licence", in which the offender is automatically sent back to jail to continue his sentence if he or she breaks the law.

Although recidivism rates for people on life licence are much lower than the average for others released from custody, about 9 per cent broke the law within two years. Of those released, 66 were convicted of serious offences such as murder, rape, robbery, and serious wounding.

Since the introduction of Discretionary Life Panels in 1992, which removed the power of release from the Home Secretary and gave it to the Parole Board, the number of lifers on licence has greatly increased.

Life Licences - Recidivism and Recalls by the End of 1995, Home Office, Information and Publications Group, Room 1304, Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Rd, Croydon, CR9 3RA. Jason Bennetto

HOUSING

Scotland sees mortgage recovery

Mortgage lending by Scotland's four clearing banks has risen substantially, signalling a recovery in the housing market. Figures released yesterday show a £351m rise in lending by the Bank of Scotland, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale Bank and the TSB, in the fourth quarter of 1996. During the same period in 1995 the increase was £258m.

Between them the four banks, which have more than 500,000 mortgage accounts, lent £16.9bn for house purchases over the quarter.

EMPLOYMENT

British women more likely to work

British women are more likely to have jobs than most of their European counterparts, according to new figures. Just over 52 per cent of women in the UK work, as opposed to nearly 60 per cent of Swedish women, and 34 per cent of Italians. Across the EU, just under half the female population has a job, while 66 per cent of men work.

Nordic countries have the highest rates of employment for women and the smallest gaps between the sexes. Italy, Spain, Greece, Luxembourg and Ireland are at the other end of the scale, according to the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

British women are most likely to work after raising a family. The peak age for them to have a job is between 40 and 44. Women graduates are most likely to work, almost matching the male rate when they are between 25 and 29, at 85 per cent.



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

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Woman of 80 gets eye cells of foetus

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

Cells from the retina of an aborted foetus have been transplanted into an 80-year-old partially blind woman in pioneering operation by American doctors. Surgeons placed a tiny sphere of about 250,000 foetal cells under the retina of the left eye of a patient suffering from a condition known as macular degeneration, one of the leading causes of blindness in elderly people.

Terry Ernest, chairman of ophthalmology at the University of Chicago Medical Center and one of the surgeons who operated on the woman, said that the retinal cells came from a foetus aborted during the second trimester, because of a threat to the mother's health. In what is, in effect, an experimental procedure, the surgeons hope that the cells will not be rejected and will regenerate in the retina.

A spokesman for the university said yesterday that the operation had been carried out last Wednesday. "Whether it makes a difference in her eyesight we won't know for three months. The early signs that it is working will be no inflammation in the eye and signs that the cells are spreading, which will take a couple of weeks."

The patient, Pearl Van Viet, a volunteer worker at the hospital, was unable to read or recognise faces from a distance. Previous transplants of foetal retinal cells in four people with a rare inherited eye disorder

have produced "somewhat improved sight", according to surgeons at the University of Rochester in New York. However, such transplants have failed in four other people.

In Sweden in 1994, the only other place where this procedure has been tested for macular degeneration, no improvement was reported.

About 15 million people globally suffer from the disorder, and a dramatic rise in cases is expected as the population ages. It involves progressive failure of the central part of the retina - the macula - which distinguishes fine detail. If the disease is caught early, it is possible to prevent further damage with laser treatment, but in the majority of cases it is untreatable. It rarely leads to total blindness as the victim retains peripheral vision.

British scientists expressed some surprise yesterday that the foetal cell transplant had taken place in the United States, where abortion remains a hotly debated political and moral issue. Some fundamental Christians in the US have resorted to violence at clinics where terminations are carried out.

Opponents also vehemently object to transplants using cells from aborted foetuses, claiming that successful transplants will encourage further abortions for the purpose of harvesting foetal tissue. However, scientists are now able to grow large quantities of healthy foetal tissue in the laboratory from a single source.

BOOK SALES

4 8 9 12 25 28 31 35 41 42 45 46 51 55 56 62 64 65 66 74 76 78 79 81 83 84

PRIZE MONEY



Numbers game: Faith Freestone, who is researching the psychology, sociology and folklore of bingo, at the Majestic Bingo Hall in Worcester Photograph: Steve Hill/Newstream

Bingo! The academic whose number is up

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Have you ever wondered why 66 is "clucky-click" or 11 is "legs"? There will soon be a scholarly answer from the newly appointed holder of Britain's first bingo research fellowship.

Faith Freestone, a former bingo caller turned student of the numbers game, is to spend the next two years exploring why licensed bingo is the nation's second favourite leisure pastime after angling.

Her studies will range widely, taking in the folklore of bingo - including the "two fat ladies" tradition of number

calling - and the history of the game from its first recorded origins as "lotto" in eighteenth century Italy.

Scorning the clichéd image of women waiting in gloomy former cinemas for their number to come up, she will develop her theory of six bingo-playing types, encompassing social adventurers, thrillseekers and escape artists.

Her research at Worcester College of Higher Education will also attempt for the first time to gauge the number of people employed by the bingo industry, which each week attracts 3 million punters.

Mrs Freestone, 42, first fell

under bingo's spell while working part-time in a club to supplement her grant during her first degree course. As well as selling the numbered cards,

she did a turn as a caller, learning the curious phrases now slipping out of use thanks to the introduction of computerised, nationwide bingo. Number 25,

in Worcester's bingo halls, was referred to as a Rainbow Hill, after a local bus and its destination. "Was she worth it?", she would cry when calling number 76, since 7/6 was the old-money price of a marriage licence.

Her appetite whetted, Mrs Freestone began a doctoral thesis on bingo, dividing players into types. Lifelines, she found, were mainly elderly women living alone who relied on the game largely as a social activity. Social adventurers loved the excitement, and often brought "accompanists" - frequently a husband or younger relative, while thrillseekers relished the adrenalin buzz and

were more likely to gamble in other ways.

Escape artists, by her definition, looked to bingo as a relief from daily problems, and novelty acts were the growing numbers of mainly young people who tried bingo as an unusual night out. Very few players, she found, were attracted by cash prizes so much as the elusive thrill of a full house.

Mrs Freestone, though herself refusing to be categorised, still plays regularly, though confesses to being less than lucky. She said: "The winning is not really the issue - it is just the unique thrill of the build-up as the numbers are called."

Eyes down for a full house

1 Just begun/Kelly's eye
3 Cup of tea
4 Door-to-door/On the floor
5 Jack's alive
6 Chopsticks
7 Hope in Heaven
8 Garden gate
9 Doctor's orders (from the once-popular pill, No 9)
10 Big Ben/Cock and hen/Downing Street/Major's den
11 Legs

13 Unlucky for some
17 Never been kissed
21 Key to the door
22 Dinky doo
26 Bad and breakfast (traditionally cost 2/6d)
76 She was worth it (7/6d, former cost of marriage certificate)
88 Two fat ladies
100 Top of the House
Ben Summers

Britain runs dry again - and it's only February

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

One thing many people can remember about the last Labour government was the great drought of '76, and the appointment of the sports minister, Denis Howell, to handle the crisis.

Yesterday, it looked as if an incoming Labour government might have to repeat history. January rustled to a close having had less than one-fifth of the average rainfall for the month. Rivers trickle, groundwater tables are at record lows and water companies fret.

It was the fourth driest January in records stretching back more than 300 years - but one dry month does not make a drought. The water companies need a better excuse if they are once again to impose hosepipe bans and further restrictions in the summer.

They may have one. It has not only been a dry winter and autumn, but a dry decade. Since the end of September, which is when the annual recharge of Britain's aquifers, rivers and reservoirs begins, England and Wales have had only three quarters of the long-term average rainfall for October to January (while Scotland has had slightly more than average).

And since 1988 the annual rainfall in England and Wales has been below the long-term average every year, apart from in 1994.

So has the English climate altered, perhaps because of man-made global warming? The Meteorological Office says it is too early to say; the shortfalls may be a random fluctuation. But water company executives say there appears to be a permanent decline in rainfall.



Dry run: The River Chess reduced to a trickle at Chesham

Photograph: Keith Dobney

They argue that because of this, and the steadily rising public demand for water, they need to expand resources, mainly by building new reservoirs. That would involve persuading Ofwat, the water regulator, to allow them to raise their bills in order to finance the construction.

Some senior officials in the Government's Environment Agency, which regulates water use, also believe the climate has become drier. But they say that before spending hundreds of millions of pounds on new reservoirs, there are many cheaper things that water companies can do to ease out supplies.

First, says the agency, they need to reduce leakage - both in their pipes and those of their customers, campaign more

about the need to save, and install meters in homes with gardens which use the most water.

Second, the companies should be made to co-operate more, so those with surplus water transfer it to neighbouring companies running short. And third, they should consider increasing the capacity of their existing dams.

If the dry weather continues into a hot summer, millions are likely to face restrictions again. But if there is average rainfall there are likely to be few drought restrictions.

Battered by criticism in 1995, the worst-hit companies began work to make better use of supplies. At a cost of \$400m, these include cutting leakage, building new pipelines to create regional water grids, and cleaning dirty water for drinking water.

But if 1997 is even drier still, these improvements may not suffice to hold up supplies. The South-east has suffered one of the biggest rainfall deficits in the country over the past four months, and it shows.

Winter pumping of water from the River Medway into Bewl Water, Kent and Sussex's largest reservoir, has had to stop because the flow in the river is below the agreed minimum.

Its owner, Southern Water, has applied for a drought order to start taking water from the river, even though flows are below the agreed level.

Next year Southern starts a project to desalinate water from an aquifer in East Kent. Folkestone and Dover Water is considering importing water from France, using the Channel tunnel's fire fighting mains.

Swanee set to go down the river

Phil Davison
Miami

"Way down upon de Swanee Ribber, far, far, away... oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary, far from de old folks at home." Some of the officially copyrighted lyrics of "Swanee River", the tale of a homesick slave which became the official anthem of the state of Florida. But is it politically correct?

A black Democrat state congressman, Willie Logan, said yesterday he would table a bill to replace it with "a song about a river that is not what it was."

He proposed a song contest among schoolchildren to come up with a new anthem. "The song is about something we shouldn't be proud of in Florida," Mr Logan said. "It's about a slave who felt alone, disenfranchised, homeless. It has no place in 1997 as a song representing our state."

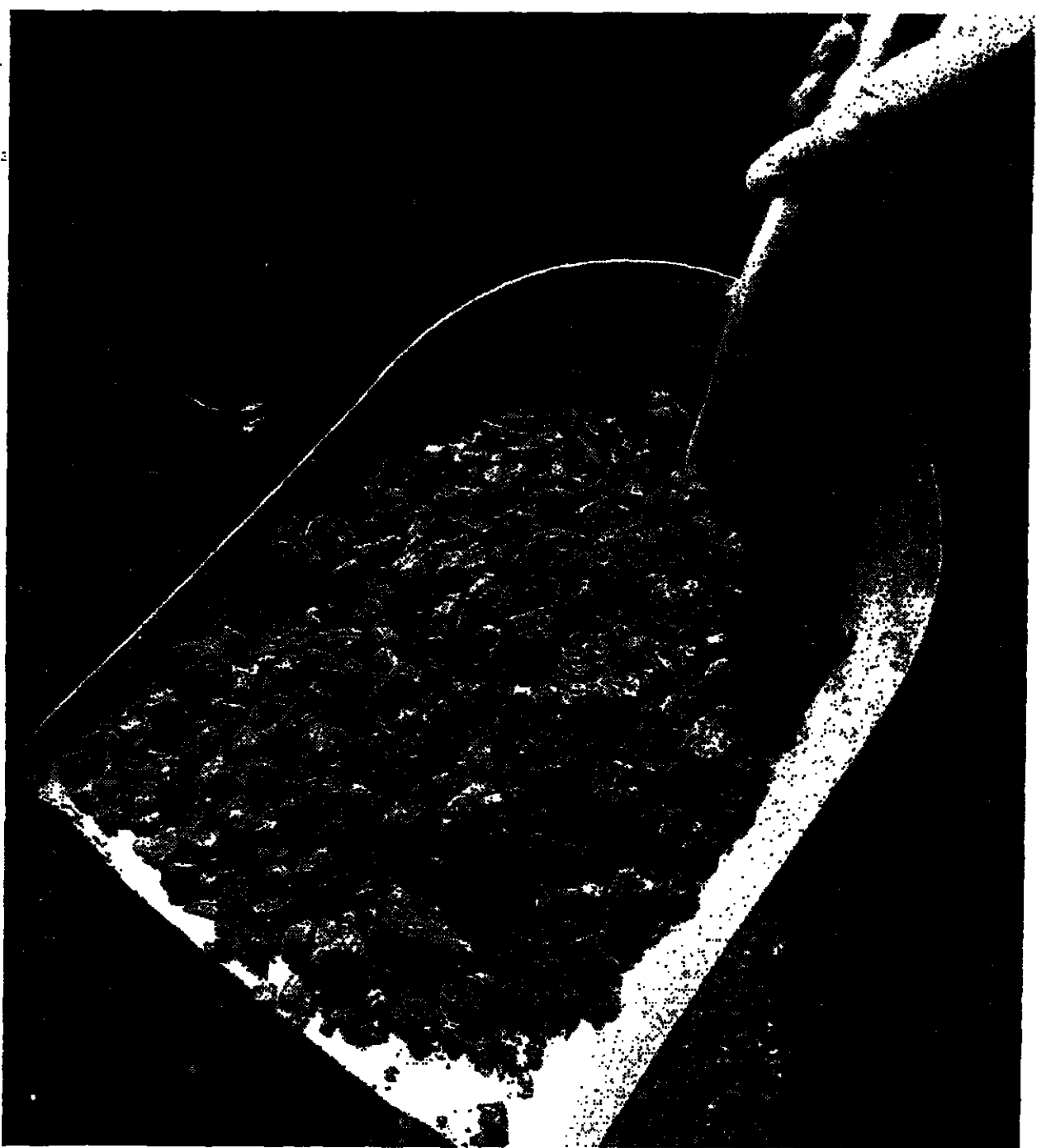
He said he had been influenced by moves in Virginia to retire its official song, "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia", because of its reference to "darkeys" and "old massa".

Democratic congressmen defended "Swanee River" as part

of Florida's history and said it had more pressing problems, notably creating jobs and improving education. In recent years, most people have sung the word "brothers" instead of "darkeys" when the song is performed at state functions. It was written in 1851 by a white man, Stephen Foster, of Pittsburgh. He had never set foot in Florida but wrote his lyrics in what he considered the slave dialect. The name came from the Swanee River, which flows into the Gulf of Mexico at Suwannee town.

The song was a hit in the lat-

ter part of the 19th century, credited with drawing settlers to a little-populated state known then for swamps, sandbars, alligators and mosquitoes. "The song is about human dignity," said Deane Root, a music curator at the University of Pittsburgh. "How all of us have a need for a home and all of us have cherished memories, no matter how painful our life has been. I was offended when I first heard the word ('darkey') but I learned it had no negative or derogative connotations to Foster or in popular culture at the time. It's like the word 'gay' in the past."



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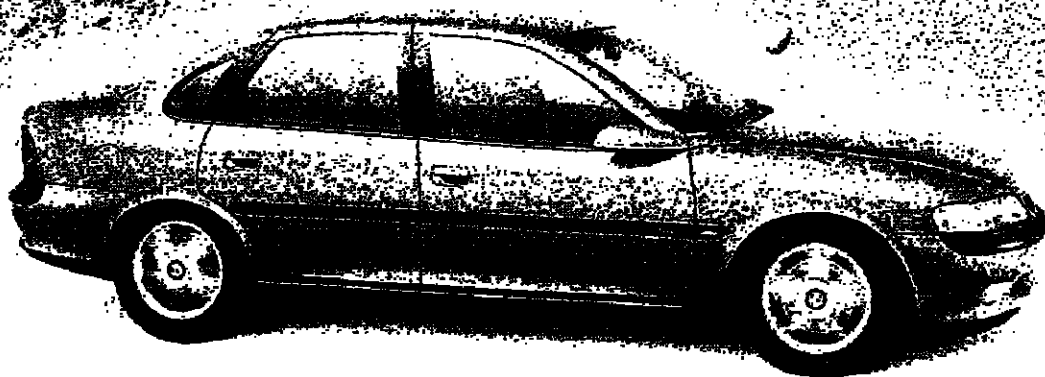
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Ratty get
his home

Baby-milk
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Dance away: Rehearsals under way yesterday at Wembley Arena in north-west London in preparation for performances to mark the 50th anniversary of Holiday on Ice. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Jail chiefs in dock for manacled dying man

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Five senior prison managers, including a deputy governor, are facing disciplinary action for the treatment of a terminally ill inmate who was handcuffed to a bed until just three hours before he died.

The head of the Prison Service yesterday made an extraordinary public apology for the episode and suggested that "compassion and humanity" had taken a back seat to unnecessarily tight security.

Geoffrey Thomas, 25, a prisoner on remand at Cardiff jail who was facing burglary charges, died in a hospice of stomach cancer on 3 January.

The death of Mr Thomas, from Caeffylly, Mid Glamorgan, who had been transferred from Cardiff's University Hospital to the nearby Marie Curie Hospice in Penarth, prompted outrage from penal affairs groups and renewed the debate about handcuffing sick inmates.

An inquiry into the incident has concluded that the inmate was treated in an inhumane way. Disciplinary proceedings, which range from a warning to dismissal, have started against five managers from Cardiff prison, the deputy governor, the senior medical officer, and three middle-managers. The then deputy governor, who has since left for a post at another jail, was in charge at the time of the incident, because the governor was away on holiday. At this stage no action is being taken against the prison officers who were guarding Mr Thomas.

New guidelines on the use of handcuffs against inmates in hospital have been issued. Richard Tilt, the director-general of the Prison Service, said yesterday: "The conclusion of that inquiry, which I accept entirely, is that he was treated in an inconsiderate and inhumane way, and that may well have impeded his nursing care, and certainly caused him additional discomfort."

"I am profoundly dissatisfied that this should have happened, and I wanted to apologise."

"I am absolutely determined that there will not be a repetition of this. What happened was unacceptable."

The director of security of the Prison Service, Tony Pearson, yesterday visited Mr Thomas's mother, Marina Davies, to apologise.

Mrs Davies, of Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan, said: "I'm glad they have seen they have done wrong but nothing can make up for the suffering my son went through."

"He was on his deathbed and he should have been allowed to die in dignity. I begged them to take the handcuffs and chain off but they wouldn't listen."

A high-risk category-A offender. In future no prisoner should be handcuffed to any item or furniture - only to the guard. There must also be continuous communications between the hospital and prison.

The manager faces a range of sanctions, from reduction in grade, financial penalty, final written warning, or written warnings about conduct.

Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, said: "The main culprit is Michael Howard, whose regulations about the manacled prisoners have been made without concern for common humanity, and have created a climate of fear among prison staff."

■ The Prison Service confirmed last night that it had bought a floating jail from the United States which was being brought to Britain by early March. It is expected to be moved in Portland harbour, Dorset, where it will help ease the overcrowding crisis.

Roads protesters plan their next site of action

Louise Jury

Anti-roads protesters evicted from three camps on the route of a major road improvement scheme in Devon vowed yesterday to carry on fighting - both on the A30 itself and at new sites around Britain.

Carol Johnston, the local co-ordinator of Devon Friends of the Earth, said: "This is not by any means the end of the battle."

Dave Howarth, 30, known as Muppet Dave, who spent seven days underground at Fairmile, near Honiton, Devon, said he had already informed police of his likely next steps. "I've already told the police intelligence unit that I may be at Guildford and at Manchester ... I will continue in my efforts to fight against the needless destruction of my country."

He anticipated that fellow tunnel-builders Swampy, and

Jan Williamson would also be fighting the road-widening scheme in Guildford, Surrey, and the proposed extension of Manchester airport.

Swampy, the last protester to emerge from the tunnels on Thursday night, appeared under his real name, Daniel Hooper, at Exeter magistrates' court yesterday, charged with obstructing the under-sheriff of Devon. Mr Hooper, 23, of Hazlemere, Buckinghamshire, was granted conditional bail, but was immediately rearrested under a non-bail warrant issued by Newbury magistrates and was due to be transported to Newbury today or tomorrow morning.

The group is determined not to give up its campaign and some are expected to raise objections to adjoining road improvements between Honiton and Ilminster, Somerset, which were announced earlier this week.

Ron Bailey, the parliamentary officer for Friends of the Earth, praised the A30 Action campaign yesterday for their efforts in publicising road congestion. A Private Member's Bill intended to reduce traffic by 10 per cent by 2010 passed its second reading in the House of Commons last week, and Mr Bailey said its success so far was due to the change in the political agenda created 10 per cent by the FoE's "wheeling and dealing" with MPs and 50 per cent by people such as the Devon campaigners.

"What these people have achieved is not just making the insanity of roads a major issue, but [winning] the support of Middle England."

Trevor Coleman, the under-sheriff of Devon, hopes to have secured the cleared Fairmile site within a week and hand the land back to Connect, the consortium which is building the road

under the Design, Build Finance and Operate scheme whereby the Government repays the cost over 30 years based on the number of cars using it.

Security guards were gunged after the successful eviction and claimed that they were being laid off after only a week despite being promised two and a half years work during construction. However, one, Robert Price, 22, from Bristol, decided to swap sides and join the protesters, for whom he had "a lot of respect". "It doesn't pay the rent, but when this happened it was just the last straw," he said.

At Exeter prison and Eastwood Park women's prison in Gloucestershire, four protesters arrested last Tuesday for going to Fairmile in breach of bail conditions continued a hunger strike yesterday, even now demanding a new inquiry into the financing of the A30 scheme.

Ratty gets protection for his home on the riverbank

Stephen Goodwin

The water vole, the misleadingly named "Ratty" of *Wind in the Willows*, was yesterday given a little assistance in its struggle for survival against the predatory American mink.

Under proposals announced by John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, it will become an offence to disturb the water vole's riverbank home or holes where it shelters.

The water vole, or water rat in Kenneth Grahame's classic, is among 33 creatures and plants to be added to the list of species afforded special protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Other additions include the basking shark, the pool frog and the bluebell.

An American mink is not rare, and its population was recently estimated to be 1.2 million. But its range and numbers are in rapid decline. A national survey in 1989-90 failed to find signs of the vole at 67 per cent of the riverside sites where it was previously recorded.



Ratty and mole relaxing in "Wind in the Willows"

The decline is partly due to the destruction of its riverside habitat by wash from boats, bank repairs and recreation disturbance.

However the biggest threat to the vole appears to be the American mink, which was imported for fur farming and now, having escaped into the

wild, is a voracious predator. Protection of its dwindling habitat should give the water vole a better chance of surviving the depredations of the mink. The penalty for disturbance or damage will be a fine of up to £1,000.

Bluebells have become endangered in some areas where

their bulbs have been dug up for sale in garden centres. Basking sharks, found off the Isle of Man and the coast of Scotland, are under threat from fishing.

But one species, the vipers bugloss moth, has recovered to such an extent that it is no longer in danger and is to be removed from the protected list.

The full list of animals is: twaite shad, water vole, basking shark, giant goby, Couch's goby, pool frog, fan mussel, fiery clearwing moth, marine hydroid, southern damselfly, Fisher's estuarine moth, stag beetle, allis shad, marsh fritillary, large copper butterfly and the pearl mussel.

The plants which have been recommended for protection are: Deptford pink, dwarf spike rush, bluebell, cutgrass, south stack fleawort, long leaved thread-moss, flamingo moss, polar feather-moss, alpine sulphur-tresses, goblin lights, convolvuloid cladonia, New Forest beech-lichen, sandy still puffball, royal bolete, oak polypore and the hedgehog fungus.

Baby-milk salmonella strain linked to outbreak in France

Michael Streeter

Three babies in France suffering from salmonella poisoning may have the same strain as British children in the recent baby milk powder scare.

According to a French press group, which has contacted local health authorities, the three infants suffered from the illness linked with the Milupa firm a week ago, when one of their products was withdrawn from sale in Britain and Ireland.

At the time the Dutch-owned company said the product linked to the 10 cases in Britain was the Milumel for Hungrier Bottle Fed Babies product, which is only sold in this country.

Général de la Santé, part of the ministry of health, has told French campaigners that out of the three cases of salmonella anatum at least two of the infants had been using Milumel. Another agency has said one of the children had been using a cereal-based Milupa product.

All the products are said to track back to the company's factory in Colmar, northern France.

A spokeswoman for the Public Health Laboratory Service in Britain said they were aware of the French cases, which had come to light after they contacted other European countries over the Salmonet network which exchanges information on outbreaks of the illness.

Two outbreaks were related they were unable to confirm any connection. At present there was only a "presumptive" link with the outbreak in Britain.

Pascale Walter, of Action pour l'Allaitement in France, a breast-feeding pressure group, said three different French authorities had confirmed the illnesses.

She said: "I cannot understand why people are so secretive about this. People know there is a problem."

Pattie Kundall, international co-ordinator of Baby Milk Action, said the public needed more information about the problem, which she feared could be much wider than reported.

Dr Colin Michie, consultant paediatrician at Basing and Hammsmith hospitals, said he

had heard of the French cases, which he described as "very worrying".

"It only needs a few organisms to affect an infant. We need to be happy that the factories and products are safe."

The Department of Health, which a week ago called for the withdrawal of the Milumel product after 10 cases of the illness were linked with it, said they were aware of the development but were awaiting news from the French authorities.

A spokeswoman for Milupa said that their Colmar factory had undergone three separate inspections and no problems had been found. She added that the salmonella in France could be a separate strain from that in the British cases, but meanwhile they were co-operating fully with all the authorities.

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Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Tebbit calls on Euro-sceptics to provoke crisis

In the Lords debate on the second reading of a Bill that would, in effect, lead to Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, the leading Euro-sceptic Lord Tebbit gave it his backing, saying that it would provoke the "crisis that is needed" to solve difficulties.

Lord Tebbit told peers the history of the EU was analogous to a game of rugby, but the federalists were pushing back those who were fighting for sovereignty. "Year by year, we who defend national sovereignty are being pushed back," he said.

The remarks of a senior figure such as Lord Tebbit, a former Conservative Party chairman and secretary of state for trade and industry in Baroness Thatcher's government, again exposed

Lord Tebbit went on: "Nor do I think it proper that we should always be a brake on their [our partners] progress to what they want to do. Wisely or unwisely they have an agenda. If we can devise a means by which they

acted, would create the crisis in Europe which is needed for the discussions to begin to make a serious effort to solve these problems. That is why I would commend it to the House."

He said: "It would be a great

Lord Tebbit warned that the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and others were intent on creating a "United States of Europe", but Britain wanted to retain its sovereignty within a common market. He said it was open to the French and Germans to go ahead with closer union, provided it was outside the Treaty of Rome, the blueprint of the EU.

"It was, after all, not the European Union which we joined. It was the European Common Market which we joined. That is where our interest lies," he said. "There is an alternative way in which we can all achieve what we want within Europe — they their union, we our common market."

Sooner or later a crisis would arise, he said, "because, above all, there is a headlong conflict over the shape, structure, purpose and the destination of the Union; because the existing institutions which were designed by six member states cannot work, in a management sense let alone a political sense, for a Europe of 20 or more states."

Responding to an attack by Liberal Democrat Lord Taverne on "Euro-septicaemia" among supporters of the Bill, Lord Tebbit said: "I think there is a sickness in our body politic

"That septicaemia is a parliamentary septicaemia. It is Brussels which is in the blood of this Parliament and it is the EU which is threatening this Parliament."

Union anger over Brown's pay warning

public-sector pay agreements must be financed from within the agreed departmental cash limits upon which departments must now plan ... So there can be no blank cheques."

agreed by the Cabinet next week, despite protests by trade unions representing some of the 1.3 million public-sector workers.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, warned the unions there would be "no blank cheque" for public-sector workers under a Labour government as the Cabinet was poised to stage the payment of rises of 3.2 to 3.4 per cent recommended by the pay review bodies.

Senior government sources confirmed the Cabinet would hold down the pay increases to below the 2.5 per cent inflation rate in the first stage, delaying the second instalment of up to 1.4 per cent to later in the year for the groups covered by the pay review bodies, including doctors, dentists, groups allied to medicine, and teachers.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, the leader of Unison, said it was "totally unacceptable" to pay the awards in two stages, although he welcomed the higher-than-inflation recommendations for "deserving" low-paid workers.

Bob Aberley head of Unison's health workers' section, said that such a move would be "totally unfair", and Doug McAvoy, of the National Union of Teachers, declared: "I would expect Labour to honour these recommendations in full."

The comments of senior union leaders reflect growing frustration behind the scenes over their policy of minimising public criticism of Labour in the run-up to the election.

That strategy was sorely tested by Mr Brown's comments that in government he would abide by the public expenditure limits laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

However, Mr Brown said: "We will wait and see what is recommended ... But I have got to be responsible and credible about what is going to happen in the future."

The shadow Chancellor told a conference for small businesses that Labour would take "a firm and fair approach" to public-sector pay within tough cash limits. "With Labour, all

Reaffirming his assurances to business that he would not increase spending or the upper and basic rates of income tax, the shadow Chancellor said a comprehensive spending review would be one of the first tasks of an incoming Labour government.

The objective of the review would be to investigate how a Labour government could reshape expenditure into the next century to encourage work, a fair society and investment. Labour will publish for the



first time a business manifesto next month, followed by a business summit headed by Tony Blair, Mr Brown and Margaret Beckett, shadow President of the Board of Trade.

Mr Brown believes the minimum wage is vital to the welfare-to-work strategy he will be laying out in the Crosland Memorial Lecture in two weeks' time, but small businesses would be consulted about the level before it was set.

Setting out five goals for a Labour government to encourage business, he said the guiding principles would be stability and low inflation; tough rules on public expenditure and borrowing; high levels and improved quality of investment; a new skills revolution to boost productivity; and "constructive engagement" in Europe.

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After 46 years in Parliament, 'old Dreadnought' sets sail for one more battle with the young guns

Ian Burrell

At war with the last two leaders of his own party, Sir Edward Heath is now under siege in his own parliamentary constituency as political rivals prepare to do battle for the seat at the general election.

Midway through his 81st year, Sir Edward faces a multiple threat at the hustings. One rival – the Liberal Democrat candidate – is so young that he was not even born when Mr Heath first moved into No 10; another – the Referendum Party candidate – is a former Downing Street adviser who used to help write his speeches. But any politician once described as "a vast old battleship of the Dreadnought class" will take some beating.

For the past 46 years he has represented the interests of the people of north Kent in Westminster, first as the MP for Bexley and now for the newer seat of Old Bexley and Sidcup.

Despite his age, and the fact that he lives nearly 100 miles away in Salisbury, Sir Edward is still seen as a local boy made good; the son of a Kent carpenter who grew up to be prime minister.

The President of the Oxford Union in 1939, he led the Conservatives to general election victory seven months before one of his chief rivals in the coming poll was even born.

Iain King, 26 last Wednesday and the Liberal Democrat candidate for the seat, is hoping to turn age into an election issue. He points out that 43 per cent of voters in the constituency are under 40, and claims that voters are telling him that they are looking for a younger MP.

"There is a view that he is a bit past it," Mr King said. "I get the impression that he is a bit bored with it all."

Mr King, who grew up in Gloucestershire before going to Oxford University, was briefly editor of a national student newspaper. For the past four years he has worked at the Liberal Democrats' headquarters in Westminster, where he is responsible for "turning key messages of party policy into soundbites".

He concedes that Sir Edward's "big achievement was getting into Europe" but thinks that health and not the single



Then and now: Edward Heath (left) acknowledging victory in his Bexley constituency in the March 1966 general election at which the Tories were beaten by Labour. Heath would have to wait until 1970 before forming a government

Main photograph: UPPA

currency is the real election issue.

One person who would strongly disagree with him is one of Sir Edward's former aides, Brian Reading, 60 – an economic adviser between 1966 and 1972 – who is standing on behalf of Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party.

"He believes Sir Edward is 'totally wrong on Europe', but says that although he has chosen to stand directly against his former

boss he bears no personal grudge and hopes the issues can be discussed without 'fudge or rancour'.

Now working as an economic consultant and writer, Mr Reading, 60, believes that Britain could only join the single currency if it gives up control of both national taxes and public spending. "As long as national parliaments are answerable to national voters, the ability of governments to raise

taxes or cut spending is constrained by what the electorate will accept."

He said Britain's relationship with Europe had already gone too far. "Many British laws are now made in Brussels, with proposals debated in secret by a council of ministers. The British people do not appear to realise that this is happening."

The Old Bexley and Sidcup constituency appears to represent the epitome of Middle England,

with one of the highest proportion of owner occupiers and the lowest percentage of non-whites of any constituency in the country. Boundary changes, however, have meant a further 10,000 voters being drawn into the area from the London side of the constituency.

In between voting at Westminster last week, Sir Edward said he was confident and "well-organised" for the coming campaign. He pointed out that

many of the older voters will know him from his days as Bexley MP prior to 1974.

The boundary changes may help the Labour candidate who Sir Edward's supporters regard as their greatest threat to his 15,699 majority. Richard Justham, 30, is a local councillor and trade union official, who has lived all his life in the constituency. His task, he says, is to show the voters that Sir Edward is out of step with his own party.

"I've got to get over to the people that while a lot of Sir Edward's values are quite honourable they are not going to see them implemented by voting Conservative."

Mr Justham's confidence is increased by the knowledge that the Tories will not be able to attack him for being soft on Europe when he is standing against the man who took Britain into the Common Market.

He hopes that the Referen-

dum Party and the fringe UK Independence Party will help him to unseat the former prime minister. "I believe that if they get the right-wing Tory vote then I will be able to sneak through the middle," he said.

Being in the middle, however, is part of Labour's problem. The party needs to present itself as an alternative to the Government but will find it hard to beat Sir Edward's own record as an outspoken critic of both the Thatcher and the Major administrations.

As recently as last week, the "old Dreadnought" returned to the fray to attack Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, over the handling of a replacement for the royal yacht *Britannia*.

Sir Edward's criticisms do not appear to have harmed him in the eyes of the electorate and New Labour may not find it easy to get to the left of him. Even Mr King, the Liberal Democrat candidate, admitted: "Some of the things he said as prime minister would now be vetoed by Tony Blair as too left-wing."

Portillo comes to aid of dumped Gardiner

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The threat that Sir George Gardiner could become a Euro-sceptic martyr increased yesterday when the Secretary of State for Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, came to his aid.

Mr Portillo, a leading Euro-sceptic in the Cabinet, called for "tolerance" in the party after Sir George's Reigate constituency voted to deselect him on account of his disloyalty to the Prime Minister over the Government's refusal to rule out a single European currency.

"George was extremely unwise and very rude to make some of the remarks he made about the Prime Minister," said Mr Portillo. "However, I believe we are a tolerant party and I am sorry to see people being asked to leave their seats after they have given good service to their constituents."

"I hope we can continue to show tolerance towards a very broad strand of opinion. We are a very broad church."

During a visit to a British Aerospace factory in Lan-



Portillo: Praised Sir George's (right) constituency work



cashire, which is engaged in the Eurofighter project, Mr Portillo admitted that Sir George's actions had not been helpful to the Conservative cause in the run-up to a general election.

"Everyone should be careful about what they say and bear in mind the consequences of what they say. But even if they say things out of line, I hope we can show tolerance for them."

He advised the rebel MP

not to stand as an independent. "I only support candidates who are Conservative, so George must bear that firmly in mind," he said.

John Major sidestepped a question about how he was over the departure of Sir George, who was deselected after the Prime Minister as Kenneth Clarke's "ventriloquist's dummy".

Mr Major said he believed

the independence of the Tory constituency associations was a very great strength within the Conservative Party, which he had no intention of changing.

"That means that the selection of candidates is a matter entirely and completely for the constituency parties and I have not in the past, will not now, will not in the future, interfere in their selections of candidates," said Mr Major.

Sir George was saying nothing yesterday about his deselection.

The blinds were drawn at his home, near Dorking, and the telephone was off the hook. His wife answered the door, but only to tell reporters: "I can't comment at all. My husband will not make a statement for another few days."

Lady Gardiner later left their home, saying that her husband was not there, and she would not speculate on reports that he was consulting solicitors about the legality of the vote.

His constituency association has already begun the process of trying to find a new candidate to replace Sir George at the next election.

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Fresh nuclear waste blow

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

The Government must block plans to build an underground nuclear waste dump at Sellafield in Cumbria, a former top ministerial adviser has warned the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer.

Nirex, the company planning the underground dump, has run into severe problems in trying to establish that radiation would not reach the surface, says Professor Sir John Knill, who from 1987 to 1995 was chairman of the Government's Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee.

In a damning letter to Mr Gummer, Sir John advises him not to grant planning permission for the proposed underground

laboratory Nirex is planning at Sellafield, which would pave the way for the full-scale repository intended to take most of Britain's radioactive waste.

He says he believes that Nirex's scientific studies into how water flows through the rocks at the site – which is crucial to its safety – had run into severe difficulties. The company now knew, but had not yet admitted, that the problems were much greater than had been thought a few years ago and more test drilling was needed.

A planning inquiry into the proposed laboratory, headed by an inspector, took place last year. Mr Gummer now has the inspector's report, and has to decide whether to give the go-ahead. Nirex wants digging for

the laboratory to start as soon as possible.

But in the meantime, Cumbria County Council and the environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth have publicised a leaked internal memorandum to senior staff at Nirex indicating that much more data on the rocks is needed. Sir John's letter is a response to that leak.

The site at Longlands Farm, near Gosforth, is two miles from British Nuclear Fuel's Sellafield reprocessing plant. So far Nirex has spent £200m investigating the fractured volcanic rock beneath the surface, but the memorandum from the company's director of science, John Holmes, revealed that its computer models wanted between 10 and 100 times more data.

The scientists are concerned

that without this, they cannot reliably model the flow of water through the rock, which needs to be capable of containing the long-lived radioactive waste for 100,000 years. The worry is that radioactively contaminated water could rise to the surface.

Sir John's letter says: "Dr Holmes' minute reflects a starkly different assessment of the likelihood of achieving an acceptable safety case for a deep repository... as compared to any that has been published by Nirex previously."

Michael Meacher, Labour's environment spokesman, said: "Sir John's letter has exposed a history of complacency, misinformation and delay around the planning process for the underground laboratory."

Pushbike licks Aston Martin in the race to unclog London

Christian Wolmar

The RAC began its centenary celebrations yesterday by showing that cars are a waste of time.

A race through the centre of London, set up by the motoring organisation and involving vehicles ranging from a 1901 French-built Mors and a 1910 horse-drawn carriage to a 1997 Aston Martin and mountain bike, showed that the horse and cart was almost as quick as the car.

The RAC has changed. No longer does it promote the gung ho "motorists are king" which has been its ethos for most of the past century. "We champion mobility, rather than the motorist," said its chief executive, Neil Johnson. It has bowed to the inevitable, aware that untrammelled freedom of the motorist is no longer viable.

Indeed, as part of its celebrations it has issued a charter "to keep our cities moving" and the race was an exercise to show that that our cities, or at least the cars in them, are now barely moving.

The charter is also full of the sort of sensible stuff that one is more used to hearing from its opponents in the environmental lobby such as spending more on public transport and reducing pollution. The RAC even wants to pedestrianise part of Trafalgar Square to improve the capital's environment.

The Independent's reporter forsook his normal bicycle for

the back seats of the £76,000 Aston Martin DB7. It was not a wise decision. Aston Martins are not designed for third parties. They can just about fit children under seven, but anyone else has to forego the seat belts and lie across the back with their head against the back windscreen, praying the driver does not go over a pothole.

Mr Johnson, who was driving the borrowed Aston Martin — "we're fully insured, I checked" — was clearly itching to break the speed limit and the rules, and possibly this reporter's head, as he sped away from the start, just off Pall Mall. The route was to take us down Piccadilly through theatre-land, round Trafalgar Square, down the Mall and back to Pall Mall, a circuit of just over three miles.

But all the power of the engine was wasted. Piccadilly was hell, blocked from one end to the other and the Daily Mail man in the front seat tried vainly to find the traffic news on the over-complex radio.

"We could have walked here more quickly," groaned Mr Johnson who confessed that he normally walked around London or used a 50cc moped.

It was only a fire engine that saved us from the ignominy of being beaten by the more manoeuvrable bubble car which had passed us in Piccadilly. With the engine sounding hell and fury, Mr Johnson went through a red light at the top of Trafalgar Square, saving a cou-



Time trial: A 1901 Mors in yesterday's race around London organised by the RAC to mark its centenary. The Mors came second behind a bicycle

Photograph: Adrian Dennis

ple of minutes.

Inevitably the cyclist, Kevin Delaney, won. Mr Delaney, is an expert on the vagaries of London's roads, having been the

police chief superintendent in charge of the city's traffic until he moved to the RAC a couple of years ago and was famous for riding round in his uniform. He

does a round trip of 26 miles on his bicycle every day and had no trouble clocking up just under 16 minutes for the journey, an average speed of 12.6mph. The

Mors, which seemed to be blessed with good fortune through the traffic came second eight minutes behind at 8.4mph while the Aston Martin was

third at 7.7mph. However, the horse-drawn carriage, was only a minute behind, managing a creditable 7.4mph despite obeying all the red lights. "I don't

know why we bother with cars," quipped one of its passengers, David Worscott, who happens to be the RAC's director of public affairs.

Scientists are ignored in ecstasy debate

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

It is almost certain that Michael Morgan, John Henry and Val Curran know more about the effects of ecstasy than Oasis star Noel Gallagher or any of the MPs who have lined up to criticise him. But while the latter have enjoyed a high media profile in the past few days, none of the others has occupied a moment of airtime or a word of newspaper.

The reason? They are scientists who have performed research into ecstasy — and so, in the strange world of the drugs debate, their knowledge, which might inform the present argu-

search is a small fraction of that published worldwide into the effects of the drug. The Medical Research Council has funded only one project into it, and that ended three years ago.

Dr Morgan, at the department of psychology at the University of Swansea, recently completed a study which suggests that regular users suffer damage to their problem-solving abilities and their short-term memory. But he has chosen to submit his work not to a UK publisher, but to the *American Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology*. "The problem with doing human research here is that the smallest thing gets blown out of proportion. My aim in submitting it in the US was to keep it in the scientific world, rather than the media."

Dr Henry, at the National Poisons Information Unit at Guy's Hospital, is the only scientist in the country with a licence to provide pure ecstasy. But he also feels that the polarisation of the debate is holding back research. "It's a very important subject which deserves study. If we have anywhere between 50,000 and 500,000 people taking it every weekend, there's a need to know what it does in the majority of cases."

The focus on the few tragic short-term cases is skewing the public's notion of the important issues, he believes. "Ten or 20 deaths now is nothing compared to the possibility of epidemic depressive illness as these people grow up — with the attendant suicides that follow," he says.

Dr Curran, a senior lecturer at University College, London, has also completed a study — due to be published later this year — showing a "midweek dip" of depression among regular ecstasy users. "There's certainly not enough research going on," she said. "But it is very difficult to do because it's illicit."

"The media attention may have helped because it brings the subject to the minds of the committees who fund research. But the money on that level is going towards BSE."

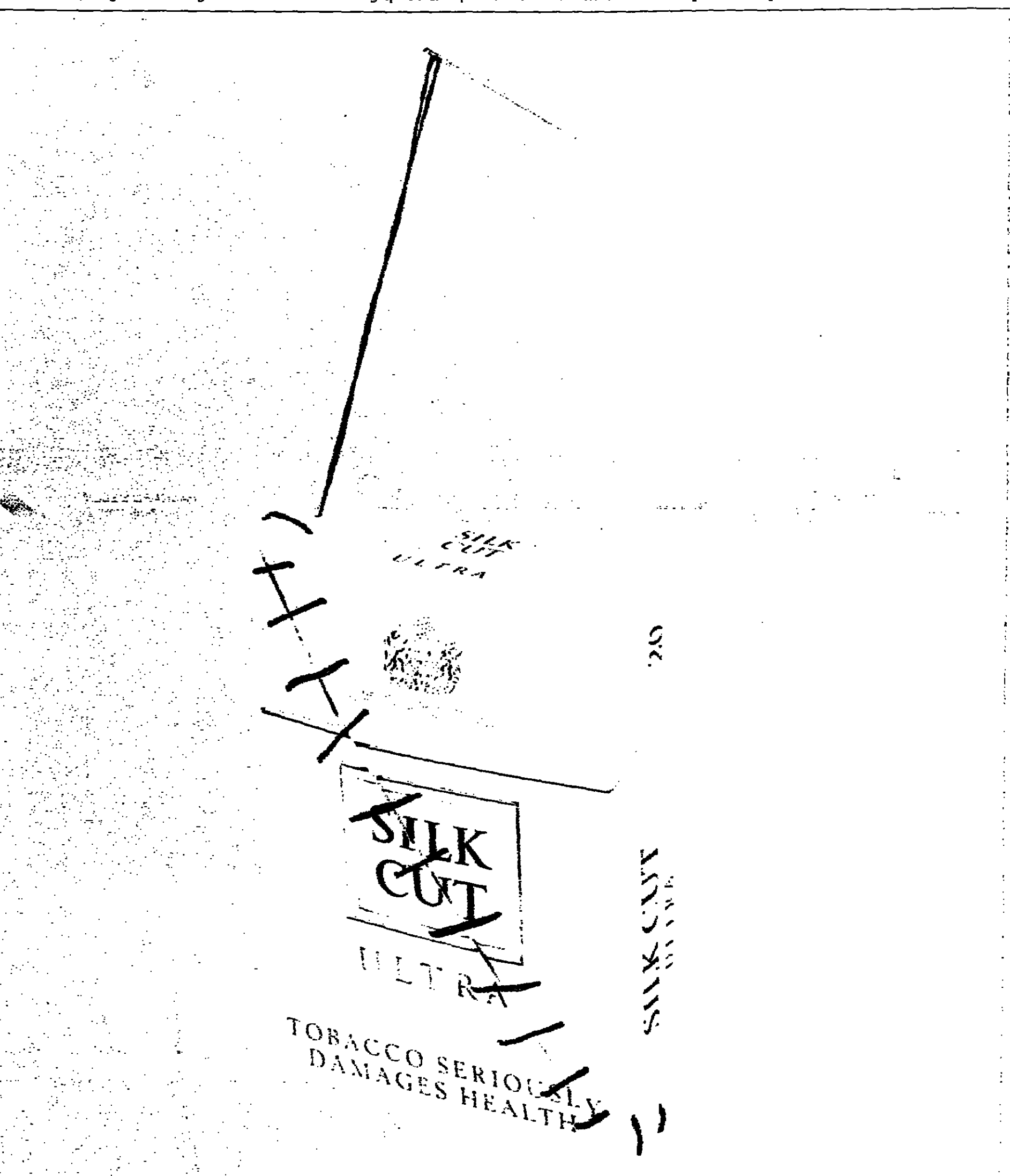
Leading article, page 19

“The problem with research here is that the smallest thing gets blown out of proportion”

ments, is quietly overlooked. However, all feel strongly that there is too little research going on to study the effects of long-term use of the drug, and that the media's constant attention, allied to the drug's outlaw status, makes it almost impossible to carry out useful work in the UK.

Unlike the debate over a possible link between mad cow disease, BSE, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, in which scientists were thrust into the limelight, the ecstasy debate has almost ignored them. Unlike CJD or BSE, there is no government money for studies into its effects. "I think it's because BSE was the Government's fault," said one researcher yesterday, "whereas ecstasy is self-inflicted. They can wash their hands of it."

There are only a handful of UK studies involving animals or



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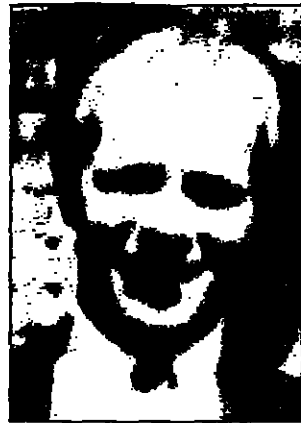
Family of Iris Bentley vow to battle on for brother's pardon

Mourners at yesterday's funeral of Iris Bentley were urged to carry on her fight to win a pardon for her brother Derek, hanged in 1953 for the murder of a policeman.

They also heard the Home Office denounced during the funeral service for its "callous indifference" in refusing to bring forward a decision which could clear Bentley's name so that his sister would have known the outcome before her death.

Miss Bentley campaigned tirelessly for a pardon until her death last week from cancer, aged 65. Speakers at yesterday's service in Collier's Wood, south London, said her fight had changed the face of British justice. Her daughter Maria Dingwall, 34, vowed to continue the battle. A note on the wreath she laid read: "Mum, you can trust me to fight to the bitter end. I will get the pardon. That is my prayer to you."

Bentley denied urging his



Iris Bentley and her brother Derek, who was hanged, aged 19. She battled for 40 years to get him pardoned



16-year-old accomplice, Christopher Craig, to shoot PC Sidney Miles after a botched burglary in Croydon, south London, but he was condemned to death aged 19 after a much criticised trial. His story was dramatised in the film *Let Him Have It* - the words he was alleged to have

shouted moments before the murder. Craig escaped capital punishment because of his age, and was released in 1963. Miss Bentley was laid to rest alongside her brother in Croydon cemetery. One of the victories in her long battle was to have his remains moved there from a prison

burial ground. A floral tribute from her closest family bore the words: "Iris, the fight carries on".

In April, Bentley's case is due to be one of the first to be presented at the Criminal Cases Review Commission for referral to the Court of Appeal. It is also believed that the Home Office will soon announce a decision on whether to grant a pardon in the light of new evidence.

At yesterday's service, solicitor Benedict Birnberg disclosed that a plea to the Home Office last October to bring the decision forward in the light of Miss Bentley's illness had been rejected. He said it was typical of the "callous indifference" with which she had been treated by the establishment.

Labour MP Joan Lester told mourners: "I am here to salute a great campaigner, an outstanding woman, who has made a major contribution to British justice and our society."



Fighting on: Maria Dingwall, Iris Bentley's daughter, at the funeral yesterday

Photograph: Glyn Griffiths

Mackay attack on adjourned sentences

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, issued an emphatic call last night for an end to the "adjournment culture" in youth courts, which was encouraging persistent young offenders to believe they were getting away with their crimes.

The warning, in the first of a series of meetings with magistrates, was coupled with an explicit reminder that prison should be reserved for more serious cases and only used in last resort for fine defaulters.

Urging Newcastle-upon-Tyne magistrates to "get tough" on lawyers seeking repeated adjournments, Lord Mackay said youth courts had to be able to link in the mind of the young person the consequences of criminal behaviour, and the punishment with the offending behaviour itself.

Advice recently issued by the Magistrates Association and the Justices' Clerks Society already suggests that in cases of "spree offending" by juveniles on bail, JPs should depart from the usual practice of tying up all outstanding cases so that they can be dealt with together.

This approach was firmly endorsed by Lord Mackay yesterday. "It's important that the magistrates should understand that they are in charge," he said.

He urged the Newcastle justices last night to be "careful to ensure that the period of the adjournment is used effectively by all concerned and that one adjournment will not simply lead to another request for a further adjournment at a later stage in the case."

Once the link between the crime and the outcome of the court case was broken, the notion of "getting away with it" was reinforced in the offender's mind, he said.

Last autumn's scathing Audit Commission report on juvenile justice, *Misspent Youth*, gave a low-key response from the Government. But Lord Mackay invoked the spreading watchdog's study yesterday, saying it showed a "disturbingly high number of adjournments in youth cases, often for very understandable reasons. It reports an average of four appearances in the course of a youth court case. This is in no-one's interests, least of all that of the young accused."

The Lord Chancellor also appeared prepared to challenge the current obsession with imprisonment: "If I may speak... directly, prison is a key deterrent to criminal behaviour and needs to be reserved for the more serious cases." The eightfold increase in immediate custodial sentences over the last 10 years was "staggering", he said. "That is not to say that the sentences were not justified but such increases must give cause for reflection. It is not sensible for prisons to be full of petty offenders who can better be dealt with in other ways," he said.

He urged magistrates to ensure that fines were seen as a punishment rather than getting off lightly. Courts should settle payment arrangements at the point at which the fine was imposed, Lord Mackay suggested. "It is worth asking the offender explicitly, 'What are you going to pay today?'"

'Son lied over mother killing'

David Howells, the man accused with his sons of killing their mother, yesterday alleged that his teenage son deliberately implicated him in order to escape the blame.

Mr Howells told Leeds Crown Court that he had never discussed ways of killing his wife, Eve, with his sons John and Glenn, despite John's claims in evidence that his father had talked about it several times in the year before her death.

Mrs Howells, 48, a teacher, was bludgeoned to death in the living room of her home in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in August 1995.

The court has heard that Glenn attacked his mother with a hammer and John got rid of the weapon and bloody clothes.

Mr Howells, a maintenance engineer, was playing darts two miles away when she died and had "the perfect alibi".

He told the court yesterday that he knew nothing of a pact until after his wife's death and had not plotted with his sons.

Franz Muller QC, for the prosecution, said that John had claimed that "we all put our

points forward what to do" in relation to the killing.

He asked Mr Howells: "All that is wicked lies to get himself off the hook at your expense; is that the position?" Mr Howells replied: "It seems like that to me, yes."

Mr Howells told the court he thought John was "scared". "He was trying to make it easier for himself by maybe trying to spread the blame on to all three of us... All I'm saying is I wouldn't have expected my son to say that."

The court heard that when Mr Howells was told by a neighbour after the attack that "something terrible" had happened at his home, he failed to ask how his wife was.

Mr Muller said: "This is the woman whom you loved and her death broke your heart, and you didn't even bother to ask what happened to her." David denied that this was because he knew exactly what had happened.

David, 48, Glenn, 17, and John, 15, all deny murder. Glenn admits manslaughter on the grounds of provocation. The trial continues.

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Timely smears knock Khan's chances for six

Jan McGirk
Lahore

Leading a national team to triumph in cricket, with its clear-cut rules, is quite distinct from mastering the murky intrigues of Pakistani politics. Two days before the election for prime minister, Imran Khan, who five years ago was idolised for winning his nation the World Cup, is reeling from the smear campaign aimed at his anti-corruption idealism.

His seasoned opponents, both former prime ministers, were cynical enough to appropriate the gist of his reformist zeal into their own sketchy party manifestos. Mr Khan has conceded in public that a victory now "would be a miracle" and that his Movement for Justice (Tehreek-i-Insaf) Party "may not even win a single seat".

While local newspaper headlines gloated yesterday over new accusations that Mr Khan had once slapped Sita White, the heiress whose paternity suit against him in Los Angeles has made their alleged illegitimate daughter one of the hottest topics of this race, Mr Khan has retreated to campaign in the Northwest Frontier province of Swat.

The conservative Pathans there welcome him as a clan brother and his admiration for their ethos has become obvious, at least since his mid-life crisis, when he gave up his Armani suits for traditional tunics and baggy trousers.

Mr Khan's recent book, published in Urdu, extolled the austere life of Pathan warriors and advocates their code of honour.



Sita White: 'Imran slapped me on a shooting expedition'

But by suggesting that offenders who steal from the nation ought to be executed, the Oxford graduate has stunned the country's intelligentsia. Many now feel his best chance of success as a mainstream politician lies in distancing himself from religious extremists.

Ms White dropped her plan to confront Mr Khan in Pakistan over his denial of fathering Tyrian Jade, aged four. But yesterday she denounced him from California in an interview with *The Nation*, an English daily, published in Lahore.

"He was the father," she said. Her earlier allegations that he had tried to talk her into an abortion because the baby was not male damaged Mr Khan's popular image as a man committed to Islamic ideals.

Mr Khan countered her attack by proxy through his young British wife, Jemima, who extolled his virtues on television and dismissed the "salacious reports" as "above all, so un-Islamic". No one benefits from reading this nonsense," she

said. The new mother, age 22, was coaxed into leaving baby Sulaiman with his nanny to address two women-only rallies in her halting Urdu.

In the interview, Ms White described in detail how she had provoked the aspiring prime minister by baring his hunting prowess. She recounted how Mr Khan crossed in front of a friend during a shooting expedition and begged the bird for himself. "We were all discussing it. Imran had fired past him. Then Imran actually slapped me across the face in front of everybody. I was just in shock. I had never seen that side of his personality."

Afterwards, Mr Khan reportedly told his stricken



Campaign trailing: Imran Khan out on the stump, where his bid to become prime minister appears doomed to failure

Photograph: AP

girlfriend: "Even if the tiger is wrong, you should say that he is right." Ms White dismissed reports in the London papers that she was jealous of her replacement in Imran's affec-

tions. "I don't know Jemima," she said. "She seems very young and innocent, and easy to push around. I feel sorry for her." Naseem Zehra, the spokeswoman for Mr Khan's party,

said: "We think this whole Sita White business is tacky. The timing is vicious. We do not want to comment."

Tonight, the candidate will fly home for the final innings be-

fore the vote. Mr Khan's followers accuse Nawaz Sharif, who most analysts believe will win the election, of manipulating Sita White into timing her embarrassing paternity suit for

the election campaign. But a spokesman for Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League shrugged this off, saying: "If Imran's past catches up with him, we are not to blame."

Only black juror in OJ case removed by the judge

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

As the jury entered their fourth day of deliberations in the OJ Simpson civil trial yesterday, the judge Hiroshi Fujisaki dismissed the only black juror, a widow in her sixties. The woman was replaced because her daughter worked as a legal secretary in the office of Los Angeles district attorney Gil Garcetti. Mr Garcetti oversaw Mr Simpson's criminal prosecution, but the judge only learned the connection yesterday, CNN reported. The judge ordered the jury to begin deliberating anew. A new juror was selected by lottery from a handful of alternates. He is an Asian American computer programmer.

Network anchors have descended in force to Camp OJ by the sea, as the media village out-

when they face the public that they want to cross every t and dot every i," said Laurie Levenson, associate dean of Loyola University law school.

Mr Simpson is being sued for wrongful death and "battery" by the families and estates of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman, who were found murdered in June 1994.

The jurors have to find out whether it is "more likely than not" that he killed them. They were reported as looking relaxed as they filed into court on Thursday to have testimony read back. If not deadlocked, however, it appeared they were still debating the issue of his liability, and have not turned to the question of damages.

In requests to the judge, the jurors asked first for a magnifying glass in order to examine the photographs which allegedly show Mr Simpson wearing the Italian-designed shoes matched with bloody footprints at the murder scene.

Since then, their interest has apparently turned to defence claims that the police massaged or mishandled the pivotal blood evidence. They asked to see enlarged photographs of DNA test results and watched a police inventory video of Mr Simpson's bedroom which shows no socks on his floor.

The defence alleges that the socks, with splashes of blood, were planted. They reviewed two other videos featuring the police witness Dennis Fung, whose shaky performance in both trials has been a boon for the defence. One showed him carrying a paper bag holding the bloody glove found at Mr Simpson's estate. Again, the defence suggests it was planted.

Los Angeles sheriff's deputies raided the home of Brenda Moran, a juror from the criminal trial, after Judge Hiroshi Fujisaki ordered an investigation into possible jury tampering. Ms Moran had signed a letter sent to two civil jurors recommending the services of a publicity agent. The letter, signed also by a second juror, said in effect: "We respect your verdict and look forward to meeting you ... if you need someone to talk to, don't hesitate to call us," her attorney said. It was supposed to be sent after the trial, Ms Moran claimed.



Simpson: Jurors appear to be still debating his liability

side the Santa Monica courthouse is known. The TV pundits who have been so free with their opinions in recent months went strangely quiet this week. When the jury in the criminal trial announced it had reached a verdict after only four hours, a wild guessing game followed. No one is willing to chance their arm for the re-run. Frustration over the waiting game has been tinged with relief.

At least this time, it appears, jurors are making a show of examining the evidence - if only to avoid the scorn which was heaped on their predecessors. "If the jury is taking this seriously, it is really good news," observed Valerie Sayers, professor at the University of Notre Dame, on CNN. "I think they



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Loathing for former colonial master casts 50-year shadows between Korea and Japan

Richard Lloyd Parry
Chonan, South Korea

The Independence Hall of South Korea, at the foot of a beautiful hill outside the city of Chonan, is like something out of early science fiction. The great signboard near the coach park lists its many attractions: scattered around the broad central plaza, punctuated by soaring monuments and stones bearing inspirational inscriptions, are the Reunification Hill, the Stairs of the 105 Patriots, and the Grand Hall of the Nation, 12,080 square metres in area, 45m high and 126m wide.

Beneath its giant tiled roof is the Statue of Indomitable Koreans, an epic, swirling mass of muscular figures, energetically casting off chains and surging into the future. The atmosphere is both nostalgic and futuristic – you half expect to come across Flash Gordon doing battle with Ming the Merciless. And the Independence Hall does indeed present itself as a battle of good against evil, an ancient struggle which even after five decades of peace refuses to be resolved.

"This is a national shrine – please behave accordingly," warns the sign, and there certainly is a near-religious atmosphere about the hall, especially on a clear, bitterly cold winter morning, with the monuments casting long shadows over the icy paths. But this is a complicated cult, based not so much upon pride in national achievements, as on mistrust, self-righteous contempt and frank loathing for Japan, Korea's near neighbour and former colonial master.

The heart of the Independence Hall is a series of seven galleries, covering Korean history



Lasting bitterness: Korean former 'comfort women' in Tokyo on 15 August 1995, 50 years after the end of the war, demanding compensation from the Japanese government. Photograph: AP

from the late 19th century to post-war independence. Among the exhibits are thousands of photographs, documents and everyday objects, displayed beneath long panels of explanatory text. The collection was begun in

1945, and is now supported by a research department of archivists and historians. But the documentary value of their work is eclipsed throughout by a relentless chauvinism, bordering on xenophobia.

Enlarged photographs show the severed heads of peasants killed by the hated coloniser. In an animated film, the beautiful tear-streaked face of a 19th-century Korean queen is intercut with those of her snarling

Japanese assassins. The most extraordinary exhibit is a wide display case containing war work scenes from the torture chambers of the Japanese colonial police. Uniformed interrogators interfere with a naked, bleeding girl; a pair of policemen smirk at an old man, bent double in a box lined with spikes.

Two and a half million visitors come here every year and among them today is a boy, Lim Jin Mook, being shown round the exhibition by his parents. "The Japanese are bad," he tells his father. "When I grow up, I want to bash them." He is 10 years old. Around his neck hangs an expensive Japanese camera.

Why do Korea and Japan, so close in culture and ethnography, and with so much to gain from friendly relations, still find it impossible to get on?

Their businessmen manage it (two-way trade amounted to \$45.5bn last year), and so do their students (there are 15,000 Koreans studying in Japan). But official relations remain hopelessly snarled in a web of prejudice, propaganda and historical resentment.

The Independence Hall may be one-sided (it makes no mention, for instance, of the millions of Koreans who co-operated and profited from the occupation), but the atrocities dramatised here are not invented. Japanese brutality in Korea began in 1932, when invading *samurai* carried away with them art treasures, the severed ears of dead enemies, and many of the finest craftsmen and artists.

In the later years of the colonisation, Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names and language in a brutal attempt to eradicate national identity.

Until recently, the grim facts of the period were skated over in Japanese schools – a generation of new textbooks, which make cautious reference to such matters, are regularly denounced by right-wing intellectuals and politicians. Among older Japanese, one frequently finds a polite xenophobia towards Koreans, an equivalent of the middle-class anti-Semitism of Edwardian England, coupled with a reluctance to face the ugly truth about their parents' colonisation of the peninsula.

A fortnight ago, a former cabinet minister, Takami Eito, cutely compared Japan's act of annexation in 1910 to "the merger of a town and a village". Last week, the night before an official visit to Japan by Presi-

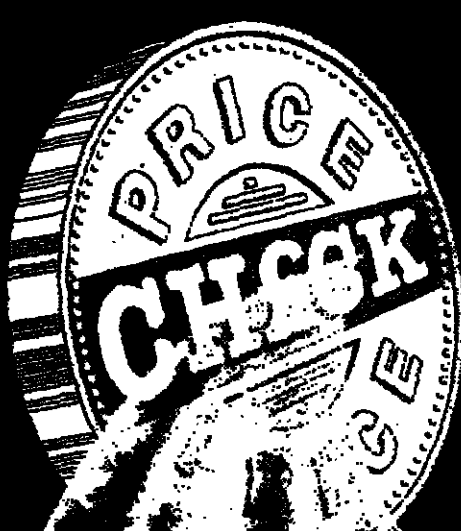
dent Kim Young Sam, Tokyo's chief government spokesman, Seiroku Kajiyama, caused an even bigger flap when he remarked of the "comfort women" – foreign slaves, most of them Korean, used as frontline prostitutes by the imperial army – that "many of them did it for the money".

But if Japanese sentiment expresses itself through historical amnesia, Korean feelings are rarely so subtle, and the Independence Hall is not the only example of government-sponsored xenophobia. Japanese popular culture (including pop music, films and comics) is banned here, a state of affairs supported, according to official polls, by most Koreans. Gaffes, such as Mr Kajiyama's, routinely provoke ugly demonstrations – as Japan laid claim last year to a rocky islet controlled by Korea, its Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were burned in effigy in the streets of Seoul. When the two countries competed last year for the rights to host the 2002 World Cup, the rivalry between them became so intense that Fifa, football's world governing body, took the unprecedented decision to award the tournament jointly.

Many Koreans, particularly those old enough to remember the colonial period, have genuine reasons for suspicion of Tokyo, but the roots of anti-Japanese feeling are complicated and closely tied with the single most important influence on politics in the peninsula: its enduring partition along Cold War lines. While the communist North was ruled by Kim Il Sung, a war hero and former resistance fighter, South Korea's defining post-war leader was Park Chung Hee, an officer of the Japanese imperial army.

In the North, collaborators with the Japanese were quickly purged, and their land confiscated; but the United States generals who took custody of the South preserved much of the former colonial machinery and those Koreans who administered it. Shame at the complexity of its leaders, and the desire to be more patriotic than the North, explains much about the Independence Hall. But it remains a sad place, as well as a magnificent one, striving not to pride in achievement, but to victimhood, self-pity and xenophobia.

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Lisbon road movie that made a star aged 93

Elizabeth Nash
Lisbon

Augusto Macedo came to Lisbon from a poor Portuguese village aged 12 to work in his uncle's bakery. After military service he fancied buying a car, so he borrowed some money and splashed out on the latest American import, an Oldsmobile Cutlass, which he used as a taxi. It was 1928 and Macedo was 24. *Taxi Lisbon*, a film recently released in Portugal, celebrates Macedo's world, focusing on his beloved car in which he ferries around a curious batch of oddballs – a Spanish circus performer, an Italian pizza mogul; they might have been invented by Fellini but are mostly real people.

It was filmed last year when Macedo was 93. In nearly 70 years, barely a day went by without Macedo at the wheel of his spectacular vehicle, making steadily progress through Lisbon's steep winding streets and elegant squares, or howling along the coast road to Estoril. Macedo won the Best Actor award at Italy's Pescara film festival last November for a performance that follows no script and consists mostly of gentle quirky tales and encounters with friends on the road. Late last year he fell ill, and he died just before the premiere on 12 January – an unhappy coincidence that cynical commentators suggest could catapult the film to cult status.

He is remembered with amusement and affection. "He was a good man," reminisces Jesus Nunes, 61, a Lisbon taxi-driver for a mere 30 years, whose Volkswagen is far more sagging and clapped-out than Macedo's splendid antique. "He liked to drive slowly and carefully, so we always had to wait for him, but he never had an accident... How he suffered with the potboles!"

The film, by the German director Wolf Gauditz, offers an unashamedly romantic vision of Lisbon, to the annoyance of some local critics, one of whom sniffed that the director, following the example of Wim Wenders' sentimental *Lisbon*



Star vehicle: Augusto Macedo sitting with his beloved car

Story, was "wearing Lisbon on his sleeve". Bruno Cabral da Silva, the young Portuguese producer, concedes that "Germans have a very romantic image of Lisbon. It's so completely different from Germany. For them it's exotic."

Only six Oldsmobile Cutlasses were made in 1928, and only three came to Europe: to France, Italy and Portugal. Macedo's alone survives, with the original engine that has clocked up 2.5 million kilometres. The clutch was replaced some 20 years ago, and the canvas canopy 15 years ago after someone slashed it with a knife. Macedo henceforth never left the car unattended, preferring to eat at the wheel.

Augusto Macedo's burly son, Fernando, 65, an accountant, lives across the street from his father's old house in the Bureca suburb in Lisbon. He says his father coddled himself in the car, his best friend. "He put the car first, ahead of his family. Every night he would clean it, look after it, spend hours in his garage. He did most of the maintenance himself, and if he had to take it to a mechanic, he'd stay with the car and not let it out of his sight."

Did Fernando ever drive it? He chuckles. "Only once, in 1962. He let me take it out of the garage, but I carried away the gates to the driveway as I reversed out. It was the only time he ever let anyone take the wheel."

Maria, 61, says: "He swore that his son and grandsons would never eat sardines without bread like his family had to, and we never did." He would come home, she says, with tales of clients from all over Europe, children and grandchildren of former clients, who had come specially to Lisbon to see him.

For the moment, the car sits in the garage, although the

family have no interest in keeping it now that its owner is gone. Tiago, 18, Macedo's great-grandson, admits he does not even know how to start it.

Stepping on to that wide ribbed running board gives a sense of occasion even before you squeeze behind the wheel. The suspension is pretty stiff, and the front seat spans a built-in toolbox containing ancient smoothed spanners, the starting handle, the jack and a notched wooden dipstick for measuring the petrol level. Doubling over the steering wheel, I had to stretch way under the bonnet for the brass-buffed brake.

The chrome is buffed to a silky sheen, the dashboard studded with well-worn knobs, and the massive black wings support Fernando's weight without a tremor. General Motors is interested in buying the car for their museum, he says, and Lisbon city authorities have agreed to name a street after his father. That, and the film, should keep his memory alive.

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Rivals scent blood as 'Kohl system' fails

Inna Karaca
Berlin

The power struggle within the German government was suspended for a few hours yesterday as Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his ministers closed ranks in the face of an opposition challenge. But even as Mr Kohl was defending his record during an emergency parliamentary debate, factional battles inside the ruling coalition raged on.

The infighting is waged on many fronts by a bewildering array of protagonists, but there is no doubt about the prize. Mr Kohl's party senses that after 14 years at the top the old man is running out of steam, prompting ambitious men and women to get their retaliation in first.



Comfort zone: Mr Kohl nibbling chocolate during yesterday's debate. Photograph: Reuters

been destined to return him to power. The overhaul of the tax system, unveiled last month, is a disaster. A week later, the cabinet gave birth to another mouse: a pension reform which will not reform them much before 2030.

At the same time, Mr Kohl's pledge to halve unemployment by 2000 has turned into a joke. The number that needs to be

halved has gone up by 500,000 since he made his promise a year ago. Post-war records will tumble again this year, and nobody can see where the new jobs will be created by a government bent on pursuing deflationary policies in order to meet the Maastricht criteria.

The party grassroots and regional grandees are clamouring for a change of direction. The crisis has the air of the end of the Thatcher era, except that in Germany the grenades being lobbed into Mr Kohl's office are mainly from the right.

In yesterday's debate, the Chancellor reiterated his aim of merely reforming the welfare state, seemingly oblivious to calls from his own ranks for a radical overhaul. His Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, read the party mood better, pointedly praising the employment record of Britain and the US.

But Mr Waigel himself is under pressure from his right-wing constituency in Bavaria to drift further in their direction, while coming under attack from his leftist cabinet colleague, Norbert Blum, the Labour Minister. Mr Blum voted against the Finance Minister's tax reforms, so the right torpedoed Mr Blum's pension plans. Meanwhile, the hard-right shot down the Waigel blueprint.

Confused? - so is Chancellor Kohl, who used to have a capable right-hand man to sort out this kind of mess. But his trusted aide and anointed successor, Wolfgang Schäuble, does not appear to be pulling his weight any more.

This may have something to do with an interview at the beginning of the year, when Mr Schäuble broke a taboo by announcing his intention to succeed his master.

"Can a cripple become Chancellor?" ran the question on the magazine's cover, below a picture of Mr Schäuble in a wheelchair. Germany's number two was paralysed from the waist down in an attack a few years ago. His answer to the question was an emphatic "yes", and since then bets on Helmut Kohl's record-breaking longevity are off.

CHAMPAGNE DAYS

It's the real thing: a few bottles of the finest from a family firm

Drive 40 minutes east of Disneyland and you come to the most famous vineyards on the planet. In winter, they look like vast and dreary cemeteries, like any other vineyards. But these are not any old vineyards. This is Champagne, purveyor of expensive hangovers to the world. In the village of Chouilly, in the heart of the Côte des Blancs, home of the finest Grands Crus, Philippe Gué was waiting for us. He had been recommended by a friend of a friend. After the sullen skies and faces of Paris, Mr Gué is a burst of sunshine. "Come and see the cellars. Have a little taste." But what about the children? "Oh they must come too."

We go to a corner of the office floor which, at the pull of a lever, drops 10 feet into the darkness. Released abruptly from the car, the children bounce around the rows of Mr Gué's precious bottles, like a pair of clumsily removed champagne corks. Mr Gué thinks this is hilarious. *Enfants* will be *enfants*; they can do no harm. Mr Gué is a tall man in his forties who seems to stand permanently at an angle, perhaps from lifting crates of wine. He opens a bottle of unlabelled champagne and pours us a glass. This, he explains, is champagne in its natural, pre-commercial state - the way the Champenois like to drink it. Before he sells it - like every other maker of champagne - he will add a strictly prescribed quantity of cane sugar and liqueur made from vintage champagne. It is the extent of this added ingredient which decides the sweetness of the wine: brut, sec, demi-sec.



Fields of plenty: Champagne vineyards in the Côte des Blancs stretching to the horizon. France is still its own best customer for champagne. Photograph: Patrick Eagar

Mr Gué and his father are among the smallest producers in the champagne region. They own just two and a half hectares - less than seven acres - of *appellation contrôlée* Champagne vineyards. They are members of a disappearing breed - the small growers who also make, bottle and market all their own wine. Many small producers, Mr Gué explains, have chosen to throw in their lot with village co-operatives. Others find it more profitable to sell their grapes to the giant champagne houses such as Moët or Mumm or Veuve Clicquot, whose factory-mansions line the road into Epernay, three miles away.

Why do he and his father insist stubbornly on making their own? Mr Gué simultaneously shrugs his shoulders and laughs. Because it is more interesting, of course; there is no satisfaction in giving labels on bottles full of communal champagne. You will never find a bottle of Réne Gué wine in a shop; you will never see one on a restaurant wine list. Philippe and his father sell all their bottles to personal callers: people who drive from all over France to the prosperous, suburban-looking pink-rendered house in Chouilly to stock up once or twice a year. The two busy periods, he explains, are just before Christmas and in May, the wedding season. At one level - the Moët level

not the Gué level - champagne is a big business which typifies the kind of luxury goods that have allowed French exports and trade surpluses to boom despite the fit of national pessimism, the high franc and the lingering recession in Europe. About one-third of all champagne produced goes abroad (with Britain by far the biggest customer). But France, despite its morose political and economic mood, remains its own best customer for champagne. On average, each man, woman, child and baby in France drinks 26 glasses a year: an impressive figure when you consider that nearly half of all French adults - contrary to the received wisdom - never drink wine of any kind. The big champagne houses have nothing like the same domination of this domestic market. Almost half the champagne sold in France comes from the smaller growers - producers and co-operatives.

Mr Gué is more interested in champagne than champagne politics but he complains that, in the drive to boost production and, therefore, exports, too many new vineyards on the periphery of the region have been given *appellation contrôlée* status. Champagne production has nearly tripled in the last 25 years, leading to doubts about quality of some of the wine produced. The expansion has been halted now, which is all to the good, Mr Gué says. Here ends the lesson: champagne is a little microcosm of France as it moves uncertainly

into the 21st century: partly a modern and very successful trading state; partly a country which clings stubbornly to its own ways of doing things but wonders how long it can do so. How do we like his raw champagne? It is a little "rude", is it not? Rude meaning not cheeky but rough. Well, yes, actually, it is a little rude; but we are assured by Mr Gué that the final product is more like what the non-local palate is used to and very fine indeed.

We wish to buy a modest amount for a party to say farewell to a colleague. You must not feel you have to buy, says Mr Gué. British callers have a reputation in small vineyards in France for always calling in the middle of lunch and buying only one bottle. We buy a few more than that. The price is Fr65 (£7) a bottle - less than half the price of a good champagne in London. But also half the price of a good bottle in Paris 70 miles away.

John Lichfield

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Tomorrow



Highs and lows: Damon Albarn, lead singer with Blur, talks to Ben Thompson

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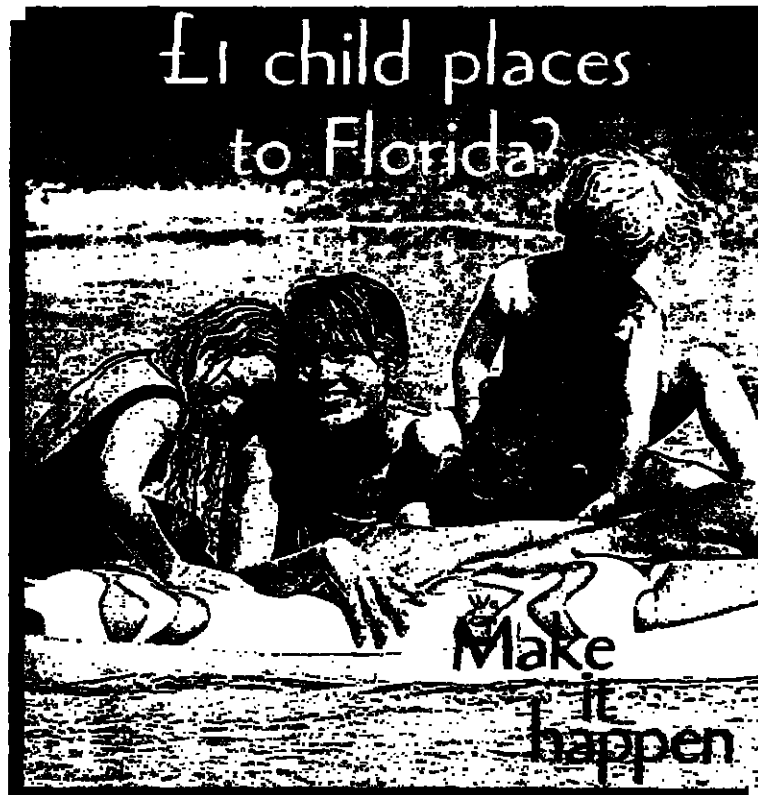
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international

Paris tightens grip on Corsica warlords

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

The Paris government may be hedging its bets on the upsurge of fighting in Zaire and keeping an embarrassed silence on the daily killings in Algeria, but it is finally addressing a problem of violence closer to home that has festered for the past 20 years. In a sharp change of policy that has gone unannounced and unremarked, Paris has started to lay down the law in the rebellious island of Corsica.

The turning point came last month, when police arrested a lawyer by the name of Marie-Hélène Mattei at Bastia airport in northern Corsica. Since then, all but one of the leaders of A

Cuncolta Naziunista, the political wing of the island's main separatist movement, the Front for the National Liberation of Corsica (FLNC), have been detained.

François Santoni, the national secretary of A Cuncolta, turned himself in within 48 hours of Ms Mattei's arrest — she is his girlfriend and, in the quasi-feudal code of Corsican nationalism, he presented his surrender as a matter of honour. Jean-Michel Rossi, the editor of Cuncolta's magazine, was captured soon afterwards.

Along with Ms Mattei, they were transferred to Paris and charged with extortion and other offences. A dozen or so more-junior activists have also

been detained. In Corsica, reports of police raids on the homes of presumed nationalists have taken over from reports of small-scale bombings and strafings as the staple of daily news bulletins.

After a month of moving slowly but systematically, the authorities in Paris exude quiet satisfaction: A Cuncolta Naziunista has been effectively beheaded and, against all predictions, there has been no bloodbath and no general strike on the island. Attacks on the mainland have become fewer and further between.

The only A Cuncolta leader still at large is Charles Pieri, secretary for upper Corsica, but he may be less of a threat than his



Blast of rage: A policeman checking damage after Thursday's second Corsican bomb attack in 24 hours in Nice, France

awesome reputation suggests. He was badly injured in a car-bomb attack last summer and his capacity to lead the movement cannot be taken for granted. What is unclear is whether Ms

Mattei's arrest was just a lucky break for the authorities or whether — as is claimed on her behalf — she and Mr Santoni were "set up" in an elaborate operation masterminded from Paris.

The specific offence with which she and Mr Santoni are charged concerns the destruction of the guardhouse at the Sperone resort and golf club in southern Corsica. The house

was blown up by a masked gang on 12 December after the resort's owner, a Paris-based businessman named Jacques Dewez, refused to comply with a demand for protection money and — in an act almost unheard of in Corsica — went to the police.

Planned or not, the stand of Mr Dewez was a godsend for the authorities. Not only did it give them the lead to Ms Mattei and Mr Santoni, it also allowed them to present A Cuncolta as a band of common or garden gangsters, thus stripping it of its political mythology.

Opponents of the nationalists in Corsica have long accused the authorities in Paris of making secret deals with the nationalists for the sake of an uneasy peace. That excuse for a policy now seems to have been abandoned.

"I believe that we have at last left ambiguity behind," the French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, said recently on television.

A crackdown in Corsica had been signalled ever since Jacques Chirac became president and Mr Juppé prime minister. Both insisted that it was unacceptable for there to be one law for mainland France and another for Corsica, given that Corsica is constitutionally a part of France.

For more than a year, how-

ever, such statements seemed like wishful thinking or even deliberate disinformation. Just how remote they were from the truth was revealed last October, when François Santoni claimed that he had had secret talks with members of Mr Juppé's staff and that Mr Juppé's office had set the terms for an armed show of strength by the nationalists the previous February — charges that were not denied.

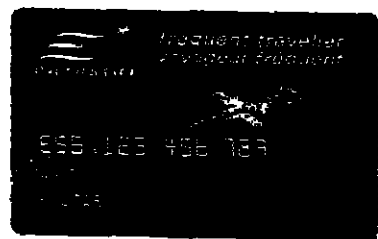
The reasons for the policy change remain unclear. Did the bomb in October at the town hall in Bordeaux — where Mr Juppé is mayor — and the personal threats against him cause the Prime Minister to change his mind? Was it simply that the public mood on Corsica was judged to have turned against the nationalists and so offered an opportunity for change?

Whatever the reasons, the government's words and deeds now seem to be in kilter for the first time. With several former untouchables in prison on the mainland, the authorities have a freer hand to tackle Corsica's desperate economic problems. Measures to establish Corsica as a partially tax-free zone and inject new agricultural subsidies are in train as Paris tries to seize back the initiative from the island's entrenched, but invisible warlords.

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significant shorts

Rebels say Zaire attack has been blunted

Zaire's mercenary-backed army had run into stiff resistance in its attempt to recapture towns and territory from rebels in the east, it was claimed. The rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, said in a radio interview broadcast from Goma, eastern Zaire, that his forces had blocked the counter-offensive and "wiped it out ... We control the territory ... In the last two days there have been no more battles. We have discovered that the enemy has retreated considerably due to the losses." Earlier, sources reported Zairean troops fighting on several fronts, with rebels heading towards Shaba province. **Reuters — Kinshasa**

Cyprus offers deal on missiles

The Cypriot President, Glafcos Clerides, offered to cancel plans to buy Russian anti-aircraft missiles if Ankara agreed a deal on the future of the island. "Of course, we don't want to waste the money," he said at a news conference. The Cypriot government's decision to buy the missiles heightened tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and between Athens and Ankara. Turkey has threatened to take whatever action is needed to block deployment. **Reuters — Davos**

Chechen victor talks peace

Aslan Maskhadov's victory in Chechen presidential elections on Sunday, followed by soothing words that oil would be able to move safely across his country, were welcomed by analysts and energy executives, who said the new president of independence-minded Chechnya had a realistic chance of stabilising the war-torn region, removing a major political risk to Caspian Sea oil projects. **Reuters — Moscow**

Horses left to starve to death

About 50 horses died of starvation at a farm in Latvia and a campaign is under way to save 29 others found so emaciated they were unable to walk. The owner was charged with cruelty to animals and faces two years in prison if convicted. Investigators, concerned by word of conditions at the farm, found horse corpses strewn across the yard and in stables. The surviving animals were so weak they had to be carried outside. **AP — Riga**

Liberia militias loath to disarm

Liberia's militiamen, who have held the nation hostage during seven years of civil war, joined a last-minute rush to disarm in time for yesterday's deadline ahead of elections in May. But it looked doubtful that all would hand in their weapons on time. With estimates of the number of fighters ranging up to 60,000, only about 16,000 have disarmed by Thursday. **Reuters — Monrovia**

Peru move to end siege crisis

The Peruvian President, Alberto Fujimori, left for a summit in Canada with the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, to plot an end to the 45-day hostage crisis, aware the stand-off with Marxist rebels could last months. The government negotiator, Domingo Palermo, Interior Minister, Juan Briones Davila, and several MPs accompanied Mr Fujimori. **Reuters — Lima**

German pigs told to trot off

Belgium said will ban all imports of pigs from Germany over fears of swine fever. The ban will start today. The Agriculture Minister, Karel Pinxten, said deliveries from any part of Germany represented an unacceptable health risk to Belgian animals. Belgium imports 50,000 young pigs from Germany every month. **AP — Brussels**

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Spectre of beggary looms over Bulgaria

Wages have halved in value since the start of the year. The lev, the national currency, is falling by the hour. Even sausages are too expensive for some shoppers.

Bulgaria is languishing in its worst economic crisis since its Communist edifice began to crack in 1989. President Petar Stoyanov, newly installed in office, told European Union leaders last Wednesday that Bulgaria was in danger of defaulting on its \$10bn (£6.25bn) foreign debt.

The Bulgarian National Bank admitted last week it lacked the resources to control the crisis. "The BNB alone will not be able to contain further depreciation of the currency, galloping inflation and deepening destabilisation of the financial system," a statement said.

There is almost no money left for importing fuel and grain. The International Monetary Fund is withholding a \$115m credit because it says Bulgaria's Socialist (ex-Communist) government has failed to introduce meaningful economic reforms. Actually, it is hard to say whether Bulgaria has a government or not. Zhan Zidenov, Prime Minister since 1994, was forced out of office last December after Mr Stoyanov scored a decisive presidential election victory over one of Mr Zidenov's Socialist colleagues.

As the lev sinks, people are desperate to convert savings into dollars, marks, or table lamps, writes Tony Barber

Then mass street protests broke out against the Socialists in early January as students, workers and opposition politicians demanded fresh parliamentary elections. Thousands of miners and public sector workers were on strike yesterday, and demonstrators closed the main road to the border with Greece for the third day.

Since the Socialists are still the largest party in parliament, Mr Stoyanov asked the Socialist Interior Minister, Nikolai Dobrev, to form a government. However, sensing the depth of public hostility to his party, Mr Dobrev has been in no hurry to carry out his task. He mused yesterday that the best solution might be a coalition government that included the anti-Socialist opposition.

Meanwhile, the crisis gathers pace. Monthly inflation in January is thought to have hit 50 per cent. Annual inflation in 1997 is predicted to reach 3,600 per cent.

The lev, which stood at 70 to the dollar one year ago and 495 at the start of this year, was quoted on Bulgaria's interbank market yesterday at 1,730 to 1,900. Its collapse has gutted thousands of people's savings.

Long queues have formed outside banks in Sofia as people withdraw their deposits. They hope to convert them into dollars or German marks before all is lost. So worthless is the lev that some Bulgarians are investing their money in cheap electrical appliances. A table lamp may hold its value better than a wad of leva.

Mr Stoyanov, visiting Brussels this week, said the Socialists

bore much of the blame. However, he pointed out that Bulgaria had suffered from the international sanctions imposed on Iraq and former Yugoslavia, which used to be two of Bulgaria's closest trading partners.

"It will be unfair to my fellow-countrymen if I pass over in silence their justified disappointment, when the sacrifice Bulgaria made in the years of sanctions against former Yugoslavia remained on the sidelines of world attention," he said. He estimated Bulgaria's total losses from the sanctions at \$6.5bn.

Aid agencies in Britain and abroad warned yesterday that Bulgaria faces a humanitarian crisis as bad, or even worse, than the one that ravaged Romania five years ago. Michael Hanlon writes. The Christian Children's Fund, a London-based charity, has launched an appeal, claiming that 30,000 Bulgarian children face starvation.



For pit's sake: Coal miners demanding an 800-per cent wage rise at a rally in Sofia

Photograph: AP

Milosevic 'set to surrender the capital'

Emma Daly
Belgrade

Serbia's embattled government hinted it may accept opposition electoral victories in the hope of curbing discontent with Socialist rule which has sparked 73 days of street protests and paralysed the economy. Dissent in Serbia is spreading, as different groups seize the moment to voice their demands.

Yesterday about 300 lawyers took to the streets to mark the start of the barristers' strike called in support of the democracy demonstrators, while hundreds of striking schoolteachers met in the capital to demand payment from the state.

"All the barristers here are real individuals - it's very hard to unite them in any way," Miroljub Belic said, as he marched beside his professional rivals. "It's a real sign of how badly something needs to change in our system."

As the column of respectable citizenry - furs de rigueur for the women, homburgs optional for men - marched up a hill in central Belgrade, they bumped into the daily student rally.

The colourful youth wing welcomed their elders with cheers, which the lawyers accepted with dignified smiles.

Rumours are rife in Belgrade that President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia is preparing to bite the bullet and allow Zajedno (Together), the opposition coalition, to take control of Belgrade city hall. There were reports last night that Mr Milosevic had sacked the head of Serbian television, which has been a target of opposition anger since the rallies began.

On Thursday night, Zoran Lilic, the mouthpiece of Mr Milosevic, announced on state television that "the results of the elections should be recognised ... everywhere the opposition won by the will of the people".

However, while he mentioned a report by the Organisation for Co-Operation and Security in Europe, which long ago said the opposition should take control of the 14 towns it won in elections on 17 November, Mr Lilic referred vaguely to "some other solution".

Locals reading the runes were sure that this time the government is beaten. "It means they're giving up. I don't see any other way to interpret what Lilic said," said Bratislav Grubisic, an independent analyst. One Western diplomat was told by officials change would come "very soon", but noted that a similar note of optimism was struck a couple of weeks ago with no result. Still, he believed that "there have been enough voices off-stage" to expect a solution to the crisis.

The students who march daily through the streets in their thousands, and the citizens who gather every night in support of Zajedno, blowing whistles and banging pots and pans in disgust at the regime, will not easily be bought off.

For all that the government mutters about compromise, it is clear there can be no shirking over the first step: recognition of Zajedno's electoral victory. Beyond that, the Socialists will probably try to set up negotiations on a wider political agenda in the hope of limiting the opposition's gains.

Alabama's jail shackle shame

David Osborne
New York

The Alabama prison system, which two years ago made headlines with the reintroduction of chain gangs, is now under attack for shackling inmates to horizontal metal bars known as "hitching posts".

Ruling on a lawsuit brought against the state by a prisoners' rights organisation, a federal magistrate judge this week assailed the system and said the apparently barbaric practice should no longer be permitted.

Typically located out-of-doors, the posts consist of a shoulder-high horizontal metal bar with eye-rings to which the wrists of inmates are attached by manacles. Witnesses testified that men would sometimes be left standing for hours in searing heat, unable to sit down or use the toilet.

"They had me chained, hitched up to the hitching rail like I was a dog," one inmate, Michale Askew testified. Another, Tony Fountain, told the

court of a day he was attached to rail when he was taking laxatives. He soon soiled himself but was left on the rail for several more hours while other prisoners mocked him.

Prison officials contended that the posts provided a useful means to control inmates who violated prison rules.

But in a scathing ruling, Judge Vanzetta Penn McPherson said: "Short of death by electrocution, the hitching post may be the most painful and tortuous punishment administered by the Alabama prison system. With deliberate indifference to the health, safety and indeed the lives of inmates, prison officials have knowingly subjected them to all of the hazards of the hitching posts, then observed as they suffered pain, humiliation and injuries as a result."

Brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the lawsuit also sought the suspension of the chain gangs.

The future of hitching posts will now go to a higher court for a ruling by a federal judge.

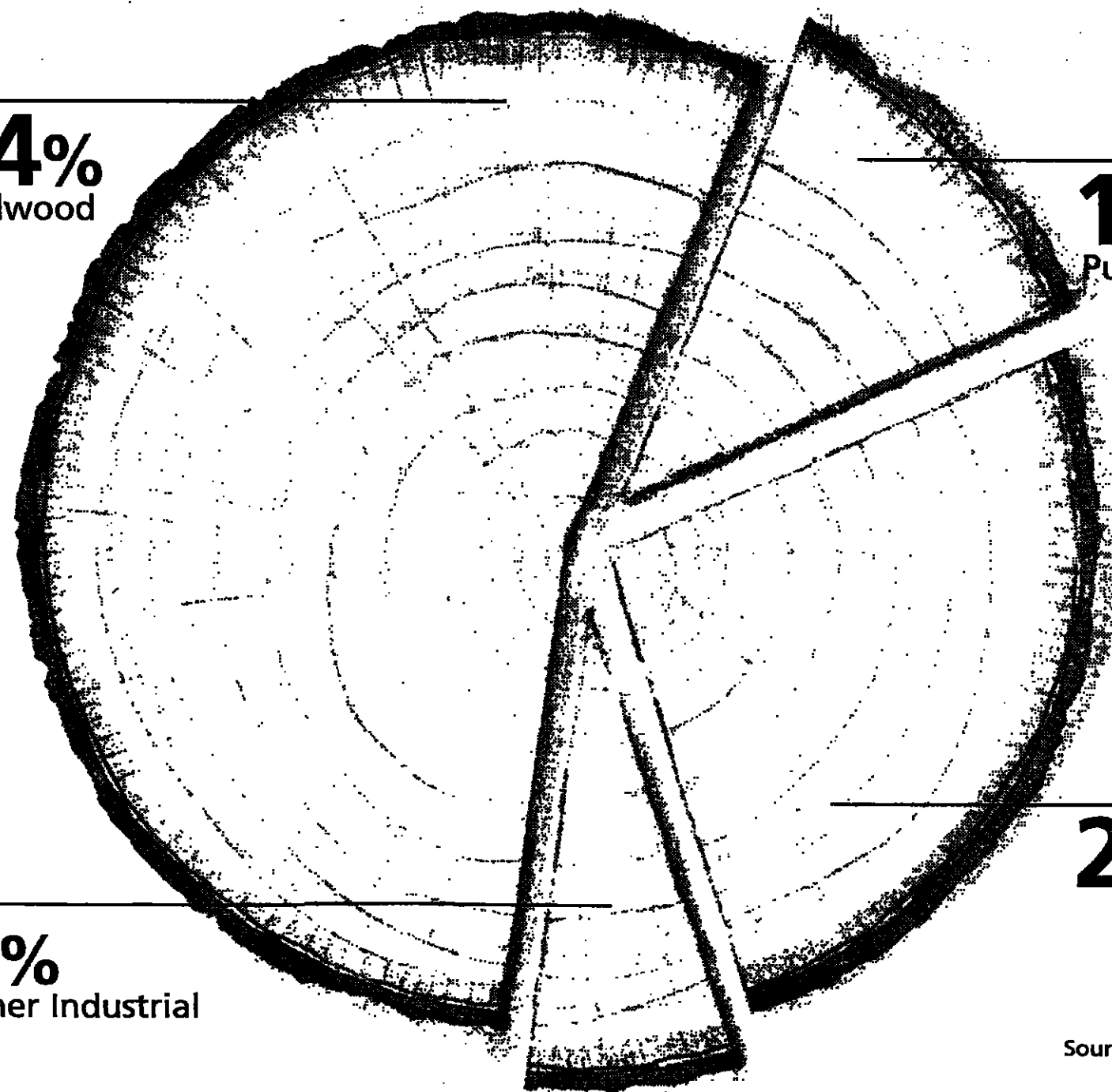
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JANUARY

- 1 Cricket England v Zimbabwe, second one-day international, Harare; England Under-19 v Combined XI, one-day game, Lahore
- 2 Snooker Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge (to 5 Jan)
- 3 Cricket England v Zimbabwe, third one-day international, Harare; England Under-19 v Pakistan Under-19, first one-day international, Gujranwala; Skating Women's Alpine World Cup (slalom, giant slalom), Maribor, Slovenia (to 4); Speed Skating British Short Track Championships, Guildford (to 4)
- 4 Football FA Cup third round; Rugby union Ireland v Italy, Dublin; European Cup semi-final: Leicester v Toulouse, France; Athletics Belfast cross-country, Mullusk; Golf British Championship of Golf, Scotsdale, Arizona (to 5)
- 5 Rugby union European Cup semi-final: Brive, France v Cardiff; Cricket England Under-19 v Pakistan Under-19, second one-day international, Skatol; Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (slalom, giant slalom), Kranjska Gora, Slovenia (to 6)
- 6 Tennis Sydney International, Men: Bellsouth Open, Auckland, Women: Tasmanian International, Hobart (all events to 11)
- 8 Football Coca-Cola Cup fifth round; Cricket England Under-19 v Pakistan Under-19, third one-day international, Karachi
- 10 Cricket England v NZ Academy XI, one-day game, New Plymouth
- 11 Horse racing Victor Chandler Chase, Ascot; Skating Alpine World Cup: Men (downhill, slalom, combined), Chamonix, France; Women (downhill, super-g), Bad Kleinerkirchheim, Austria (to 12); Speed Skating World Junior Short Track Championships, Michigan (to 12)
- 12 Cyclo-cross British Championships, Sutton Park, Birmingham (to 9); Athletics Amorbier cross-country meeting, Spain
- 13 Tennis Australian Open, Melbourne (to 26); Cricket England v NZC Selection XI, Palmerston North (to 16)
- 14 Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (giant slalom), Adelboden, Switzerland
- 17 Athletics IAAF Indoor permit meeting, Montreal; Speed Skating European Short Track Championships, Malm0 (to 18)
- 18 Rugby union Five Nations' Championship, Scotland v Wales, Murrayfield; Ireland v France, Dublin; Cricket England v Northern Districts, Hamilton (to 21); Rhythmic Monte Carlo Rally (to 23); Skating Alpine World Cup: Men (downhill, slalom), Wengen, Switzerland; Women (slalom, giant slalom), Zwiesel, Germany (to 19)
- 19 Figure Skating European Championships, Paris (to 27); Sailing UK Admiral's Cup team at Key West (to 26); Athletics Seville cross-country
- 20 Football FIFA World Player of the Year 1996 announced, Lisbon
- 23 Golf Johnnie Walker Classic, Hope Island, Queensland, Australia (to 26); Athletics St Petersburg indoor meeting
- 24 Cricket England v New Zealand, first Test, Auckland (to 28); Skating Alpine World Cup: Men (two downhill, slalom, combined), Kitzbuhel, Austria; Women (downhill, giant slalom, super-g), Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy (to 26)

FEBRUARY

- 1 Snooker Royal Welsh Open, Newport (to 1 Feb)
- 25 Football FA Cup fourth round; Rugby union Heineken European Cup Final, venue the Athletics AAA Indoor Championships, Birmingham
- 26 American Football Super Bowl XXXI, Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans
- 27 Tennis Men: Croatian Indoor tournament, Zagreb; Shanghai Open, Women: Pan-Pacific Open, Tokyo (all events to 2 Feb)
- 29 Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (super-giant slalom), Laax, Switzerland
- 30 Cricket England v New Zealand, first one-day international, Christchurch; Golf Alfred Dunhill South African PGA championship, Houghton, Johannesburg (to 23); Athletics IAAF Indoor meeting, Stockholm; IAAF Grand Prix Two event, Melbourne
- 22 Horse racing Gretna Gold Cup, Haydock; Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (downhill, super-g), Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany (to 23); Rhythmic Gymnastics British Championships, Milton Keynes (to 23); Athletics IAAF indoor meeting, Athens
- 23 Cricket England v New Zealand, first one-day international, Auckland; Football Coca-Cola Cup semi-final, first leg
- 24 Tennis Men: Davis Cup, World Group, second round; Euro-African Zone, Group 1, Great Britain v Ukraine or Zimbabwe, British venue (to 6); Golf Central England Open Men's Fourstones, Woodhall Spa (to 6)
- 5 Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Estoril, Portugal (to 6); Gymnastics Great Britain v Russia, women's international (to 6); Rowing Vesta Scullers Head of the River
- 6 Football Coca-Cola Cup Final; Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Silverstone; Cycling World Cup, Tour of Flanders
- 7 Tennis Women: Hausch & Lomb Championships, Amelia Island, Fla, Men: Estoril Open, Salem, Oregon, Hong Kong (all events to 13)
- 8 Athletics IAAF permit meeting, Cape Town
- 9 Football European club competitions, semi-final, first leg
- 10 Golf US Masters, Augusta, Georgia (to 13)
- 12 Cycling World Cup, Paris to Roubaix
- 13 Football FA Cup, semi-final; Athletics London Marathon; Motor racing Argentinean Grand Prix, Buenos Aires; British Formula 3 Championship, Thruxton; Motorcycling Malaysian Grand Prix, Sepang; Le Mans 24-hour endurance race; Rallying Spanish Rally, Lloret de Mar (to 16)
- 14 Tennis Japan Open, Tokyo, men: Seat-Goda Open, Barcelona (both to 20)
- 15 Horse racing Craven meeting, Newmarket (to 17)
- 18 Hockey Women's inter league play-offs, Milton Keynes (to 20)
- 19 Rugby union County Championship Final, Twickenham; Horse racing Scottish Grand National, Ayr; Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Magny-Cours, France (to 20); Sailing Hyeres week, France (to 26); Snooker Embassy World Championship, Sheffield (to 5 May)
- 20 Motor racing Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Donington; Tennis LTA spring satellite, venue (to 27); Cycling World Cup, Liège-Bastogne-Liège; Motorcycling Japanese Grand Prix, Suzuka; Superbike event, Misano
- 21 Tennis Men: US Clay Court Championships, Orlando; Monte Carlo Open, Women: Dannon Open 97, Jakarta; Budapest Lotto Open, (all events to 27)
- 23 Football European club competition, semi-finals, second leg
- 24 Golf Peugeot Spanish Open; West of England Stroke Play Championship, Royal North Devon (both to 27)
- 26 Horse racing Whitbread Gold Cup, Sandown; Cycling World Cup, Amstel Gold, Netherlands

MARCH

- 1 Cricket England v New Zealand, fourth one-day international, Auckland; Rugby union Five Nations' Championship, Scotland v Ireland, Murrayfield; England v France, Twickenham; Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (downhill, super-g), Kvitfjell, Norway (to 2); Athletics Great Britain v Russia, indoor meeting, Glasgow; indoor meeting, Sindelfingen
- 2 Cycle speedway World Cup, Findon, Australia
- 3 Tennis Men: ABN/AMRO World Tennis Tournament, Rotterdam; Franklin Templeton Classic, Scottsdale, Ariz (both to 9 Mar); Women: Evier Cup, Indian Wells, Cal (to 15); Hockey Men's World Cup qualifier, Kuala Lumpur (to 15)
- 4 Cricket England v New Zealand, fifth one-day international, Wellington
- 5 Football European club competitions, quarter-finals, first leg; Hockey Women's School Championship, Milton Keynes (to 6); Skating Men's Alpine World Cup (slalom, giant slalom),

APRIL

- 6 Golf Moroccan Open (to 9); Skating Women's Alpine World Cup (slalom, super-g), Mammoth Mountain, California (to 7)
- 7 Athletics World Indoor Championships, Paris Bercy (to 9); High jump meeting, Wuppertal; NCAA Indoor Championships, Indianapolis (to 8)
- 8 Football FA Cup, sixth round; Horse racing Imperial Cup, Sandown; Rowing Women's Head of the River
- 9 Motor racing Australian Grand Prix, Melbourne; Athletics Sao Vittore cross-country; Cycle speedway World Individual Championships, Salisbury, Australia
- 10 Tennis Men: Newsweek Championships Cup, Indian Wells, Cal; Copenhagen Open (both to 16); Sailing Congressional Cup, Long Beach (to 17); Snooker Thailand Open (to 16 Mar)
- 11 Horse racing Cheltenham Gold Cup meeting (to 13)
- 12 Football Coca-Cola Cup, semi-final, second leg; Skating Alpine World Cup Finals (downhill, slalom, giant slalom, super-g), Vail, Colorado (to 16)
- 13 Golf Portuguese Open (to 16)
- 14 Rallying Welsh Rally, Mobil 1/Top Gear British Championship (to 15)
- 15 Rugby union Five Nations' Championship, Wales v England, Cardiff; France v Scotland, Paris; Rugby league Super League starts; Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Monza (to 16)
- 16 Football Coca-Cola Cup, semi-final, second leg; Figure Skating World Championships, Lausanne (to 23); Hockey Men's Golden Jubilee Six Nations Tournament, Karachi (to 23)
- 17 Tennis Lipton Championships, Key Biscayne (to 29); Men: St Petersburg Open (to 23); Athletics IAAF Grand Prix Two event, Johannesburg
- 18 Snooker Benson & Hedges Irish Masters, Goffs (to 23)
- 19 Football European club competitions, quarter-finals, second leg
- 20 Golf Turespaña Masters (to 23)
- 21 Rugby union World Cup Sevens, Hong Kong (to 23)
- 22 Horse racing Lincoln Handicap, Doncaster; Rowing Head of the River; Rallying Portuguese Rally, Figueras del For (to 27); Cycling World Cup, Milan to San Remo
- 23 Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Donington; Athletics World cross-country championships, Turin; Motorcycling Superbike event, Phillip Island, Australia
- 24 Tennis Men: Grand Prix Hassan II, Casablanca (to 30)
- 27 Golf Madeira Island Open (to 30); Snooker British Open, Plymouth (to 6 April)
- 28 Sailing Rolex Cup, St Thomas, France (to 30); Hockey European Cup Winners' Cup tournament, Reading (to 31)
- 29 Football Scotland v Estonia, World Cup qualifying Group Four, Hampden Park; Wales v Belgium, World Cup qualifying Group Seven, Cardiff; Northern Ireland v Portugal, World Cup qualifying Group Nine, Windsor Park; Speed Skating World Short Track Championships, Nagano, Japan (to 30)
- 30 Motor racing Brazilian Grand Prix, Interlagos, São Paulo

MAY

- 1 Motor racing Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Donington; Horse racing Irish Grand National, Fairyhouse; Tennis Women: Family Circle Magazine Cup, Hilton Head Island, SC (to 6)
- 2 Football Scotland v Austria, World Cup qualifying Group Four, Hampden Park; Macedonia v Republic of Ireland, World Cup qualifying Group Eight; Ukraine v Northern Ireland, World Cup qualifying Group Nine
- 3 Horse racing Grand National meeting, Aintree (to 5)
- 4 Tennis Men: Davis Cup, World Group, second round; Euro-African Zone, Group 1, Great Britain v Ukraine or Zimbabwe, British venue (to 6); Golf Central England Open Men's Fourstones, Woodhall Spa (to 6)
- 5 Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Estoril, Portugal (to 6); Gymnastics Great Britain v Russia, women's international (to 6); Rowing Vesta Scullers Head of the River
- 6 Football Coca-Cola Cup Final; Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Silverstone; Cycling World Cup, Tour of Flanders
- 7 Tennis Women: Hausch & Lomb Championships, Amelia Island, Fla, Men: Estoril Open, Salem, Oregon, Hong Kong (all events to 13)
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- 20 Motor racing Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Donington; Tennis LTA spring satellite, venue (to 27); Cycling World Cup, Liège-Bastogne-Liège; Motorcycling Japanese Grand Prix, Suzuka; Superbike event, Misano
- 21 Tennis Men: US Clay Court Championships, Orlando; Monte Carlo Open, Women: Dannon Open 97, Jakarta; Budapest Lotto Open, (all events to 27)
- 23 Football European club competition, semi-finals, second leg
- 24 Golf Peugeot Spanish Open; West of England Stroke Play Championship, Royal North Devon (both to 27)
- 26 Horse racing Whitbread Gold Cup, Sandown; Cycling World Cup, Amstel Gold, Netherlands

JUNE

- 1 Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Silverstone; Motorcycling Austrian Grand Prix, Osterreichring; Sailing Round Europe: Chelmsford to Stockholm 21; Athletics IAAF Grand Prix Two event, St Denis; Hockey Women's Champions Trophy, Berlin (to 8)
- 2 Golf British Amateur championship, Royal St Georges & Royal Cinque Ports 7
- 3 Athletics IAAF Grand Prix Two event, Bratislava; Polo Queens Cup, Gads (to 22)
- 4 Rugby union Transvaal v Lions, Johannesburg; Golf English Open Seniors Championship, West Hill, Woking (to 6)
- 5 Cricket England v Australia, first Test, Edgbaston; Golf Slaley Hall Northumberland Challenge, Slaley Hall, Hexham (to 8); Women: Danish Open, Vejle (to 8); Athletics IAAF Grand Prix event, Rome
- 6 Horse racing The Oaks, Epsom

THE YEAR'S

- ATHLETICS**
- London Marathon 15 April
- CRICKET**
- New Zealand v England: Auckland, 24-28 Jan; Wellington, 6-10 Feb; Christchurch, 14-18 Jan
- England v Australia: First Test, Edgbaston, 5-9 June; Lord's, 19-23 June; Old Trafford, 3-8 July; Headingley, 24-28 July; Trent Bridge, 7-11 July; The Oval, 21-25 July
- Benson & Hedges Cup final: Lord's, 12 July
- Westwood Trophy final: Lord's, 6 Sept
- Tour de France 5-27 July
- FOOTBALL**
- Coca-Cola Cup final: 6 Apr
- UEFA Cup final: 7 and 21 M
- European Cup Winners' Cup final: 14 M
- FA Cup final: 17 M
- Scottish Cup final: 24 M
- European Cup final: 28 M
- GOLF**
- US Masters: Augusta, 10-13 Apr
- US Open: Bethesda, Maryland, 12-15 Jun
- The Open: Royal Troon, 17-20 Jun
- US PGA Championship: Winged Foot, 14-17 A
- HORSE RACING**
- Cheltenham Festival: Mar
- Grand National: Mar
- The Derby: Jun
- MOTOR RACING**
- British Grand Prix: Silverstone, 23 Jun
- Le Mans 24hr: 14-15 Jun
- RAC Rally: Chester, 21-24 N

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- ATHLETICS**
- London Marathon 15 April
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MAIN EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
29 March	European Cup final	Twickenham, 10 May
11 Oct	World Cup Challenge final	Cardiff, 10 May
20 Sept	South Africa v British Isles	Murrayfield, 10 May
18 Jan	World Championship	Sheffield, 19 April - 6 May
18 Jan	World Championship	Manchester, 24 April - 5 May
1 Feb	World Championship	Sheffield, 19 April - 6 May
1 Feb	World Championship	Manchester, 24 April - 5 May
15 Feb	World Championship	Sheffield, 19 April - 6 May
15 Feb	World Championship	Manchester, 24 April - 5 May
15 March	World Championship	Sheffield, 19 April - 6 May
15 March	World Championship	Manchester, 24 April - 5 May

20	Motorcycling German Grand Prix, Nurburgring
21	Tennis Women: Bank of the West, Stanford, Cal; Warsaw Cup, Men: Northern Electric Open, Newcastle; Generali Open, Kitzbuhel; Aut. Croatia International Championships, Umag; Infiniti Open, Los Angeles (all events to 27)
22	Cricket Gloucestershire v Pakistan A, one-day game, Cheltenham
23	Athletics International meeting, Lappeenranta, Finland
24	Cricket England v Australia, Fourth Test, Headingley, Leeds; Pakistan A, four-day game, Trent Bridge

9	Golf Walker Cup, Quaker Ridge, New York (to 10); Tennis British National Veteran Championships, Wimbledon (to 17); Cycling San Sebastian Classic, Spain
10	Sailing Fastnet Race starts; Motor racing Hungarian Grand Prix, Budapest; Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Snetterton
11	Tennis Men: RCA Championships, Indianapolis; Pilot Pen International, New Haven, Ct; Toronto (all to 17); LTA summer satellite, West Worthing (to 16)
13	Athletics Grand Prix event, Zurich
14	Golf US PGA Championship, Winged Foot, Mamaroneck, New York; Women's British Open, Sunningdale; Men's European Open, Hainault (all to 17); Equestrianism Blechnie International Three-day Event, Odonsville (to 7)

1	Rowing World Championships, Aiguebelette, France (to 7); Gymnastics World Championships, Lausanne, Switzerland (to 7)
2	Hockey Women's Under-21 World Cup, Songnam, Korea (to 13)
3	Athletics IAAF Grand Prix Two event, Rieti, Italy
4	Golf Canon European Masters, Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland (to 7); Women's French Open, Paris (to 7); Equestrianism Blechnie International Three-day Event, Odonsville (to 7)
6	Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Donington (to 7); Horse racing Haydock Park Sprint Cup; Rugby league Super League quarter-finals; Cycling Tour of Spain (to 28)

21	Motor racing Austrian Grand Prix, A-1 Ring; Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Silverstone; Sailing Whitbread Round the World Race starts; Motorcycling Superbike event, Albacete, Spain; Horse racing Irish St Leger, The Curragh; Tennis LTA autumn satellite, venue tba (to 28)
22	Tennis Men: Grand Slam Cup; Romanian Open, Bucharest; Toulouse Grand Prix (both to 28); LTA summer satellite masters, Havant (to 22); women: Wismilak International, Surabaya, Indon (to 28)
24	Equestrianism Horse of the Year Show, Wembley Arena (to 28)
25	Cycling World Masters Challenge, Manchester (to 25); Golf Women's Turkish Open, Antalya (to 28)
26	Golf Ryder Cup by Johnnie Walker, Valderrama, Spain (to 28)
27	Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, Spa-Francorchamps (to 28); Horse racing Queen Elizabeth Stakes, Ascot; Rugby league World Club Challenge quarter-finals

18	Cycling World Cup, Tour of Lombardy, Italy
19	Motor racing RAC Tourist Trophy, Donington
20	Tennis Men: Eurocard Open, Stuttgart; Mexican Open, Mexico City; Women: Bell Challenge, Quebec City; Scot Open, Luton (all to 28)
22	Sailing Whitbread round the World competitors due in Cape Town; Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships, Berlin (to 25)
23	Golf Oki Pro-Am tournament (to 26)
24	Golf Women's Deauville Open, France (to 26)
26	Motor racing Portuguese Grand Prix, Estoril
27	Tennis Women: Kremlin Cup, Moscow; men: Paris Open; Columbian Open, Bogota (all to 2 Nov)
30	Golf Volvo Masters (to 2 Nov); Rallying Australian Rally, Perth (to 3 Nov)

NOVEMBER

1	Rugby league Great Britain v Australia, First Test, venue tba
3	Athletics New York Marathon; Tennis Men: Kremlin Cup, Moscow; Stockholm Open, Sweden; American Open, Chicago (all to 9)
6	Golf Sarazen World Open (to 9); Rowing Fisa Masters Regatta, Adelaide (to 9)
8	Rugby league Great Britain v Australia, Second Test, venue tba; Horse racing Breeders' Cup Day, Hollywood Park; Cycling World Track Challenge, Manchester; Sailing Whitbread Round the World Race, second leg to Fremantle starts
10	Tennis Men: ATP Tour World Championship, Hannover; Guardian Direct Nationals, Telford (both to 16)
15	Horse racing Mackeson Gold Cup, Cheltenham; Rugby league Great Britain v Australia, Third Test; Gymnastics Men's British Championships, tba (to 16)
17	Tennis Women: Chase Championships of the Corel WTA Tour, New York; Men: Phoenix/ATP Tour World Doubles Championships, Hartford, Ct (both to 23)
20	Golf World Cup of Golf, Kiawah Island, SC (to 23)
21	Rallying RAC Rally, Chester (to 24)
22	Motor racing Global Endurance GT race, venue in Brazil tba (to 23); Horse racing Ascot Gold Cup
28	Tennis Davis Cup final (to 30)
29	Horse racing Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup, Newbury

OCTOBER

2	Golf Women's World Match Play Championship, venue tba (to 5); Linde German Masters (to 5)
4	Motor racing Japanese Grand Prix, Suzuka; Rugby league World Club Challenge semi-finals
5	Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Silverstone; Motorcycling Superbike event, Sugo, Japan; Cycling World Cup, Paris-Tours race
6	Tennis Men: Davis Cup semi-finals; LTA autumn satellite masters, venue tba (to 10); British national veteran indoor Championships (to 11); Women: Porsche Grand Prix, Filderstadt, Ger (to 12)
8	Cycling World Road Race Championship, San Sebastian, Spain (to 12)
9	Golf Toyota World Match Play Championship, Wentworth (to 12); Hockey Men's Champions Trophy, Adelaide (to 19)
11	Rallying San Remo and Italian Rally (to 15); Motor racing Global Endurance GT event, Barcelona (to 12); Rugby league World Club Challenge final
12	Motor racing Japanese Grand Prix, Suzuka; British Formula 3 Championship, Thruxton; Motorcycling Australian Grand Prix, Phillip Island; Superbike event, Sentul, Indonesia
13	Tennis Men: Czech Indoor tournament, Ostrava; Lyon Grand Prix, Women: European Indoor tournament, Zurich (all to 19)
16	Golf Alfred Dunhill Cup, St Andrews (to 19)
17	Horse racing Cesarewitch meeting, Newmarket (to 18)



Hana Mandlikova is back in the world with a new focus

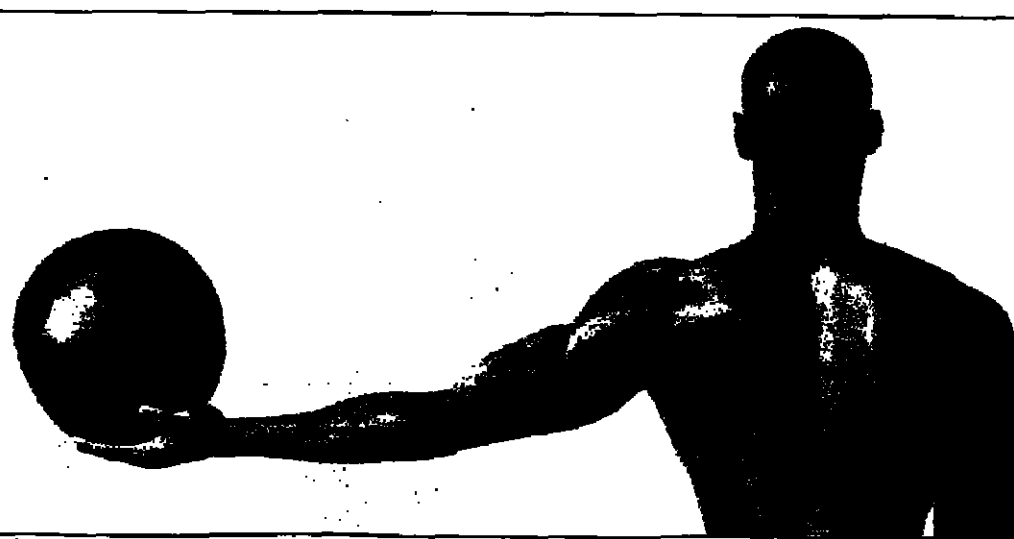
AUGUST

1	Athletics IAAF World Championship, Athens (to 10); Cricket Somerset v Australia, four-day game, Taunton; Gloucestershire v Pakistan A, four-day game, Bristol; Equestrianism British Open Horse Trials Championships, Gatcombe Park, (to 3); Rallying New Zealand Rally, Auckland (to 5); Ulster Rally, Mobil 1/Top Gear British Championship (to 3); Hockey Women's World Cup qualifier, Harare (to 12); Rowing Coupe de la Jeunesse, holme Pierrepont, Nottingham (to 3)
2	Rugby league World Club Challenge matches
3	Sailing Cowes Week (to 10); Motor racing Auto Trader RAC British Touring Car Championship, Knockhill; Motorcycling Superbike event, Brands Hatch; Tennis LTA summer satellite, Southsea (to 9)
4	Tennis Men: Great American insurance ATP Championship, Cincinnati; Women: Acura Classic, Los Angeles (all to 10)
5	Polo National 15 Goal Championship, Cirencester (to 17)
6	Golf British Seniors Open, Sherwood Forest & Coombe (to 8); Equestrianism Dublin Horse Show (to 10); Rowing Junior World Championships, Hazewinkel, Belgium
7	Cricket England v Australia, Fifth Test, Trent Bridge; Yorkshire v Pakistan A, four-day game, Headingley; Golf WPGA Championship of Europe, Gleneagles (to 10); Czech Open (to 10)

JULY

1	Rugby union South African Barbarians v British Isles, Welford; Sailing Coupe de France (to 5)
2	Athletics IAAF Grand Prix event, Lausanne, Switzerland; Rowing Henley Royal Regatta (to 6); Cricket Nottinghamshire v Pakistan A, three-day game, Trent Bridge; Golf European Men's Team Championship, Portmarnock (to 6)
3	Cricket England v Australia, Third Test, Old Trafford; Golf Volvo German Open (to 22); European Seniors Open, Ascona, Switzerland (to 21)
4	Athletics IAAF Grand Prix event, Oslo
5	Cycling Tour de France, starts in Rouen (to 27); Horse racing Eclipse Stakes, Sandown; Cricket Derbyshire v Pakistan A, three-day game, Derby
6	Cricket Gloucestershire v Pakistan A, one-day game, Cheltenham
7	Cricket Gloucestershire v Pakistan A, one-day game, Cheltenham
8	Horse racing Newmarket July meeting (to 10); Sailing Hamble Week, including 6m Euros (to 12)
9	Cricket Minor Counties v Australia, one-day game, Jesmond; MCC v Pakistan A, three-day game, Shenley, Hertfordshire; Athletics IAAF Grand Prix Two event, Linz, Austria
10	Golf Loch Lomond Invitational (to 12); Equestrianism Royal International Horse Show, Hickstead, Sussex (to 13)
11	Athletics AAA Championships, Birmingham (to 13); Rowing Lucerne International Regatta (to 13)
12	Cricket Scotland v Australia, one-day game, Edinburgh; Motor racing British Formula 3 Championship, Silverstone; Rowing Henley Veterans' Regatta
13	Motor racing British Grand Prix, Silverstone; Global Endurance GT race, the Motorcycling Superbike event, Laguna Seca, California
14	Tennis Men: Mercedes Cup, Stuttgart; Legg Mason Classic, Washington; LTA Manchester Challenger, West Didsbury; women: Czech Open, Karlovy Vary; Palermo International (all to 20); LTA satellite, Prinston-on-Sea, Essex (to 19); Cricket ECB XI v Pakistan A, one-day game, Walsall; Athletics International meeting, Salamanca, Spain; Golf and Gymnastics Special Olympic Games, Portsmouth (to 18)
15	Swimming Celtic Cup, Pwllheli (to 19)
16	Cricket Glamorgan v Australia, three-day game, Cardiff; Worcestershire v Pakistan A, three-day game, Worcester; Athletics Grand Prix event, Nice; World Veterans Championships, Durban (to 27)
17	Golf Open Championship, Royal Troon (to 20); Sailing Source Regatta, including ILC40s and Mumm 36s, Lymington (to 20)
18	Cycling British Track Championships, Manchester (to 26); Rowing National Championships, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham
19	Cricket Middlesex v Australia, three-day game, Lord's; Somerset v Pakistan A, three-day game, Taunton; Athletics International meeting, Sestriere, Italy and Hechtel, the Netherlands; Kenyan world championship trials, Nairobi (to 21); Rowing Nations Cup, Milan (to 20); Rugby league World Club Challenge matches

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POLO SPORT
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ESSENCE



obituaries / gazette

Alfred Gell

Alfred Gell was arguably the most brilliant social anthropologist of his generation. He had a very rare combination of intellectual skills, and often dazzled his readers and listeners with both his penetrating logic and imaginative insights, many of which came from his unusual ability to transcend conventional boundaries of knowledge.

Gell took his BA in social anthropology from the University of Cambridge in 1968 and completed his PhD degree at the London School of Economics in 1973 with a thesis based on his fieldwork in a remote settlement in New Guinea. He held lectureships at the LSE, Sussex University and the Australian National University, and in 1979 he was appointed Reader in Anthropology at the LSE. He received several academic prizes and in 1995 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

His academic reputation was primarily based on a score of articles and three books: *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries* (1975), *The Anthropology of Time* (1992) and *Wrapping in Images: a study of tattooing in Polynesia* (1993). He also completed a fourth book, *The Art Nexus*, which will be published soon.

Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries was an outstandingly original book, particularly in its interpretation of ritual in the Umeda settlement in New Guinea. Drawing inspiration from Lévi-Strauss, but depending more on his own aesthetic sensibility, Gell exhaustively teased out the complex meanings of Umeda ritual life. The book gave rise to a continuing debate about whether Gell overstated the coherence of Umeda thought and practice, but even his severest critics acknowledged that he had taken the analysis of "tribal" ritual to a new level of sophistication.

Read superficially, his first book may suggest that Gell liked to exaggerate the otherness of other cultures. Nothing could be further from the truth. In many ways he was a romantic, but he was also adamantly rationalist, and *The Anthropology of Time* relentlessly deployed philosophical arguments and ethnographic data to demonstrate that such anthropological writing about exotic concepts of time is fallacious. Although specialists may find some of his arguments unconvincing, the book as a whole is a masterly refutation of exaggerated cultural relativism.

Wrapping in Images and his forthcoming book *The Art Nexus* represent Gell's main contributions to the anthropology of art, a rather stagnant subdiscipline he was determined to shake up. He characteristically combined a deep understanding of art history and criticism with studies of

dance and technology, mixed in his philosophical knowledge, and worked through a mass of ethnographic literature to generate a radical cross-cultural perspective on art and its social context which has thoroughly revolutionised the field.

When at Sussex, Gell met and later married Simeran Man Singh. With Simeran, he began fieldwork among the Muria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh in India and made a number of visits there. Based on this research, he wrote several important articles and developed an increasing interest in India. His last public academic appearance was to deliver the Frazer lecture in November 1996, when he presented a typically radical analysis of ritual and tribal rebellion among the Gonds.

At the LSE, Gell was an inspired teacher, to whom many of his students became devoted. He was not always consistent, but his best lectures were

scintillating and his students were rarely if ever bored. He was, as he admitted, dreadful at administration, which sometimes exasperated his colleagues. But nobody could ever be angry with Gell for long after he had charmingly and sheepishly apologised for his lapses. He was perhaps most impressive in the anthropology department's weekly seminars. However good or bad the paper, Gell would usually deliver a comment, a question or sometimes a demolition that nobody else could have thought of. Sometimes he was wrong, but far more often he was right in a way that neither the speaker nor the audience had previously perceived. The LSE without Alfred Gell will be a duller place.

In seminars, it was a good idea to sit next to Gell, because then one could also enjoy the drawings which always covered his notepad. He was a very tal-

ented artist and a project cut short by his death was a series of drawings and paintings of the old Muslim tombs near the Qutb Minar south of Delhi. On a beautiful spring afternoon in 1995, Alfred and Simeran Gell took me to visit the tombs, which had come to fascinate him. As monuments of Delhi's ruined empires, the tombs are evocative symbols of a past culture that also remind us of the realities of political power and its disintegration, and he was drawn to them, I think, by the same mixture of romanticism and hard-nosed rationality which animated the anthropological work for which he will long be remembered.

Gell (and his work) will be remembered too for his distinctive intellectual courage and integrity. He detested posturing and on detecting untruth he announced it forcefully. But he was not just a critic; he was also passionate and unequivocal

about the truth as he saw it, and was never afraid to question the conventionally unquestionable. A few years ago, Alfred Gell had been seriously ill and had had one eye surgically removed. In late summer 1996, he discovered that he had an incurable cancer. He managed to complete his fourth book and

to deliver his Frazer lecture, and he told his closest friends that he had achieved what he had wanted to. In his last few weeks, he weakened rapidly until he died, as he had wished, peacefully and at home with dignity. He was 51.

Facing death, as he had already faced serious illness, he again displayed his courage, as well as a profoundly impressive calmness and realism; he continued to entertain and enlighten his family and friends until he was just too weak to do so any longer.



Gell: romanticism and rationality

Chris Fuller

Antônio Callado died, aged 80 and two days, a week after stating that to live beyond 80 was an exaggeration, almost an excess. No wonder one of his friends said once that Callado was the "only real-life English gentleman to write great Brazilian novels".

This elegant, witty, handsome man cultivated a British image as a private and public joke. He worked for the BBC during the Second World War, married a Briton, had the thin mustache of a retired colonel of the shires, and shared his drinking tastes between whisky and well-chosen port vintages. His father, a doctor, had cultivated the French image fashionable in his day. But both were as Brazilian as they come, and Callado created in his fiction what one critic described as "the epitome of the best men of our generation".

This was no small feat, as Callado wrote during a golden age of Brazilian literature. His first novel, *Assumpção de Sabiniano* ("The Assumption of Sabiniano"), was published in 1954, and his last book, *O homem cordal e outras histórias* ("Men of Feeling and Other Stories"), came out in 1993. In this 40-year period some important works by key Brazilian writers – such as Guimarães Rosa, Clarice Lispector, Autran Dourado, Lígia Fagundes Telles, Nélida

Raya Garbousova

The distinguished Russian-born cellist Raya Garbousova seemed to be virtually immortal. She not only looked 20 years younger than her age, but also possessed remarkable energy that enabled her to teach and give master-classes right up to the end.

She was born in Tiflis in Georgia into a family of musicians: her father was principal trumpet of the Tiflis Symphony Orchestra and professor at the Conservatory. She began studies on piano at the age of four and when she heard her father's friend Sergei Koussevitsky playing double-bass she decided she liked the deep sound and started on the cello at six. Her progress was so rapid she entered the Tiflis Conservatory the following year as a student of Konstantin Miniar, a pupil of Dvořák.

After a successful debut in Tiflis and many solo appearances, in 1924, aged 18, she made debuts in Moscow and Leningrad, where a critic compared her playing to that of Emanuel Feuermann. Also at this time, she played chamber music with two young musicians just making a name for themselves in Russia, Nathan Milstein and Vladimir Horowitz.

Garbousova made her debut recital in Berlin in 1926 with the pianist Michael Taube, and again the critics raved about her "colossal talent" and described her as "an exceptional musical phenomenon". It was Taube

who introduced her to Albert Einstein, who had a passion for the violin. She told me: "I played chamber music with him, but I'm sorry to say he wasn't very good and was always a little bit out of tune. But he was a wonderful old man and we became very attached to each other." Einstein remained a devoted fan and would place a box of chocolates on the stage instead of flowers.

She made her Paris debut in 1927 and it was there that she met Casals and studied with him. She later appeared in Barcelona as a soloist with Casals conducting his own orchestra. It was he who suggested she should study with Dorian Alexander and she considered that what she learnt from him remained all her life as her "musical capital".

What I learnt from him was overwhelming. His whole approach to the instrument changed my ideas. I also returned to him much later and that became one of the most important periods in my musical life. It was not only the tuition but the discussions we had about everything you can imagine – quite apart from music – which were of the greatest importance.

Garbousova's London debut took place in 1926 and again the critics were bowled over by her talent. Her first American engagement came about because the pianist Ossip Gabrilovitch had heard her in Paris and immediately invited her to play the Haydn D major Concerto with the Detroit Symphony Orches-

tra, of which he was the conductor. Shortly afterwards she was engaged as a soloist by Sergei Koussevitsky, now conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This was a happy reunion for them both.

In 1934 Garbousova made her recital debut at the Town Hall in New York and Olin Downes from the *New York Times* waxed lyrical: "Miss Garbousova's technique is the vehicle of a contagious temperament, musicianship and taste. The crowning fact is the distinction of her style." From this time onwards she appeared in concerts all over the world, but made her home in Paris. Her first husband died fighting in the French Resistance in 1943 and in 1946 she became a citizen of the United States, where she met and in 1949 married the cardiologist Dr Kurt Bliss. Their two sons are both musicians.

Many composers wrote works for Garbousova: she commissioned and premiered the Samuel Barber Concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Koussevitsky in 1946 and was frequently consulted by the composer on the instrumental possibilities related to the cello; it was published with the cello part edited by Garbousova. She also premiered the Martinu Third Sonata in the US and Prokofiev's Sonata. She made numerous recordings and held



Garbousova: kisses for Toscanini, chocolates from Einstein

master-classes world-wide. She was professor of cello at Hartford University (1970-79) and at Northern Illinois University (1979-91), where she was made Honorary Doctor of Human Letters in 1992.

Garbousova was not only a very beautiful woman with a film-star charisma, but kind, gentle and considerate to all who came within her orbit. She also had a delightful sense of humour. There is a story from her early years about when she was at a party and took on a five-

dollar bet to kiss Toscanini, who was sitting at the next table. The maestro was delighted to be approached by such a beautiful young girl and offered the other cheek. Encouraged by his enthusiasm she kissed him on both cheeks with the excuse that she could now claim 10 dollars.

Margaret Campbell

Raya Garbousova, cellist: born Tiflis, Georgia 25 September 1909; twice married (two sons); died DeKalb, Illinois 28 January 1997.

Antônio Callado

Pinón, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, and Rubem Fonseca – were published.

Callado's masterpiece, *Quarup* (1967), whose title is the name given by Xingu Indians to a death ceremony, was his third novel, and was hailed as a fictional landmark. The story of a priest who finds love and a political conscience amongst the Xingu Indians, it is a *Bildungsroman* that is at the same time a backstage panoramic view of Brazil's history in a period of crisis. It starts with the suicide of the populist dictator Getúlio Vargas in 1954, and closes with the beginning of the armed resistance to the 1964 military coup.

For both the Brazilian left and liberation theologians *Quarup* was a mirror and a signpost. The novel was first drafted in prison by Callado, in a cell shared with the film-maker Glauber Rocha, during the first repressive wave of the military dictatorship in 1965. At that time Callado was a leader writer for *Jornal do Brasil*, one of the three main national Brazilian dailies. For those of us who read his novels and his limp, cordacious articles, and knew him as a fellow journalist, Callado was one of the great newspapermen of the period and a model to follow. His generosity with young colleagues, and his professional integrity, were legendary.

When an intrepid opponent of

the dictatorship, Carlos Heitor Cony – also a distinguished journalist and novelist – was forced to resign from the paper Callado edited, Callado resigned with him in protest. He may have been, as one of his friends said, "the sweetest of radicals", but those of us who rallied to him learned never to give up in dark times.

Callado became a journalist at 20 in 1937, during Vargas' Estado Novo fascist dictatorship. In 1941 he came to London to work for the BBC's Brazilian Service, and after the Second World War worked in Paris for Radiodiffusion Française and as a European correspondent. As a reporter, editor, and leader writer he worked for all the main Brazilian daily newspapers. After retirement in 1975 he devoted himself to literature, but continued to write weekly articles to the last.

His last novel was *Memórias de Aldenham House* (1989), set in the country house where the BBC language services were located in the 1940s. Not the best of his efforts, it is a political thriller in which he fondly recalls his British experience.

Ringo Estensson

Antônio Callado, writer: born Niterói, Brazil 26 January 1917; married 1943 Jean Watson (deceased), 1977 Ana Amado; died Rio de Janeiro 28 January 1997.

William Frederick Whimster, histopathologist: born Nottingham 7 June 1934; Senior Lecturer in Morbid Anatomy, King's Col-

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Whimster: knight's move

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Forget the lectures. Young people need facts

What decisions are young people qualified to make? On sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll and voting, our attitudes are often inconsistent. This week young people were told by politicians what to think about Noel Gallagher's claim that taking drugs is like "having a cup of tea". They are always being told by politicians not to have sex, although politicians themselves seem to enjoy it in all sorts of prohibited circumstances. And this week another group of politicians asked for their votes, although under-18s don't have them.

Long ago, tea was considered a threat to social order. Now it is the drug of choice for the over-sixties. More recently, civilisation as we know it was threatened by rock 'n' roll. Now the generation that was corrupted by it is running the country, although there is a dissonance between the rebelliousness of youth and the conservatism of maturity. This year we are likely to have a prime minister who once snarled Mick Jagger lyrics in purple looms, but who speaks winningly of strong families. He may not have done drugs, but he surely knows a lot of people who did.

It is on drugs that the gap between what people actually think and what it is considered proper to say is greatest. Both Noel Gallagher and Brian Harvey, the East 17 singer, provided an instant self-rebuttal service of which the political parties would be proud. Mr Gallagher did not actually retract what he

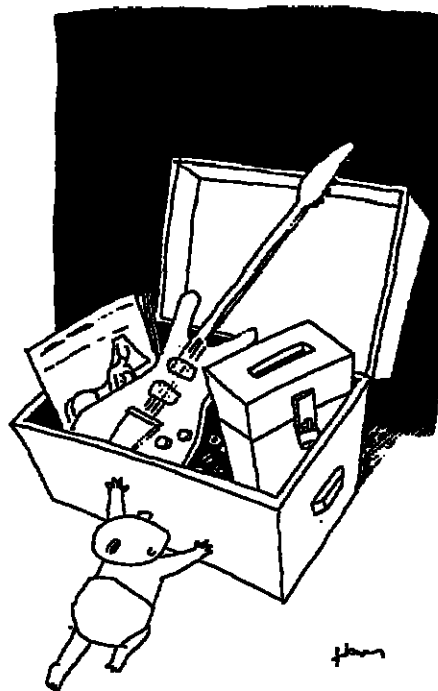
said, but when someone is "glad to have started a debate" you can hear the clatter of backpedalling. Clare Short and the Liberal Democrat conference have both called for a debate and look what happened to them. Mr Harvey was not in such a strong position. Despite a 180-degree U-turn within hours, he was sacked by the rest of his clean-living band.

The gap is rapidly becoming unbridgeable, and it cannot be long now before the possession of some controlled drugs is decriminalised. Of all attitudes on social issues, views on the legalisation of cannabis have undergone the most dramatic transformation of the past decade. Since 1983, support for legalisation has gone up from 12 to 31 per cent, with a majority now in favour among under-25s.

The Independent has long argued that cannabis should be legalised and licensed, and removed from the churches of organised crime. We might draw the line at commercial advertising (imagine the slogan, "Just Say Yes"), but our main reservation about cannabis is that it makes people boring. The same argument probably applies to ecstasy - but, as we report today, the political hysteria about the drug is inhibiting research. It may be that regular users are prone to depressive illnesses, but not enough is known about the long-term effects.

Objective information is the key, and our view is that, on the whole, young people are quite capable of making sophisticated decisions if they are given the facts. In spite of terrible tragedies like the death of Leah Betts, young people will mostly make rational choices for themselves and attempts at total prohibition will generally fail. Young people know that some drugs are dangerous, that injecting is not a good idea, and that the people who get into "hard" drugs usually have other problems. In fact, most young people are probably better informed about drugs than most politicians. They know that politicians speak with forked tongue on this subject, and they can spot the illogicality of banning some boring drugs and not others (alcohol, for example, which causes more death and dismay than any other drug available). What young people want from their elders is not lectures on subjects they know little about but advice based on experience: about how to avoid getting emotionally screwed up, about education and job choices. Pop stars may not be the best role models, but at least they speak from personal experience. And most people are well aware of their fallibility. We all remember an earlier cup of tea, when Boy George said he preferred one to sex, but later admitted he was lying.

The big question is: at what age should people be allowed to make responsible decisions? And the answer for drugs is the same as for most other things. Eighteen is the age at which we become self-governing adults, with some



flexibility downwards under parental supervision in some things and some anomalies upwards, such as the ban on being a parliamentary or local council candidate until 21.

Heterosexual sex and smoking at 16, and driving at 17, are the main exceptions. These are untidy evidence of our inconsistent attitudes. Smoking, like marriage, should of course only be allowed with parental consent between 16 and 18. After that, it shouldn't be allowed at all. And men should not be allowed to drive cars or motorbikes until they are 21; women, who are much more responsible, should be permitted to drive from, let's say, 14.

As for sex, the formal age of consent is much less important than information and education, not just about sex but about relationships, bringing up children and self-esteem. And to put the moral panic in perspective, there has been no change in the rate of pregnancies among under-16s since the Seventies.

We see no reason, however, why the "age of majority" should generally be brought down from 18, and so we do not support the Liberal Democrat plea to give the vote to 16-year-olds. The right to vote is perhaps the most important badge of adulthood and it should stay right where it is, marking the move from dependence on one's parents, to trying to make some sense of the world on your own. How many of us, a decade or so further on, think we are any better at it now?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Toyota warning means Britain must choose to join Europe or join the Third World

Sir: It is with no surprise that I hear the news that Toyota are no longer going to invest in Britain if we do not join the European single currency (report, 30 January). This is the sort of thing I feared would happen if we stood shivering and complaining on the brink of full European membership.

The reason that so much Japanese industry has invested in Britain in recent years is that we are in the EU. If we do not commit ourselves fully and properly, Toyota and other Japanese companies will withdraw from this country, leaving us with a

vast increase in unemployment and a greatly depleted manufacturing base, not to mention vastly reduced exports and a large (or even larger) balance of payments deficit. Cheap manufacturing bases are becoming available all the time in Eastern Europe. It is essential to make our membership of the EU full and solid if we are not to become a Third World nation.

PHILIP BAKER
Ottley St Mary, Devon

opinions of the Toyota chairman to support their cause, nor that they ignore the fact that Norway has enjoyed an increase in inward investment since refusing to join the European Union.

However this affair brings in sharper focus the decision the British people now face. Even were it to be true, which it is not, that withdrawal from the European Union would entail financial penalties, are they prepared to see their birthright and freedoms treated as commodities to be sold, and to see the levers of fiscal control pass out of the hands of their

elected representatives for ever? Car makers may come and go but our democratic system is worth a million such.

COLIN BULLEN
National Membership Secretary
UK Independence Party
Tonbridge, Kent

Sir: Sir Teddy Taylor's Article "Beware! VAT on food" (29 January), though broadly accurate, is misleading in one notable omission - we already have VAT on food in the UK. Most snacks, biscuits,

confectionery, fruit juices and soft drinks incur VAT at 17.5 per cent, which was not imposed by Brussels but under the present government. Other EU countries tax these products at lower rates.

Furthermore, the current EU legal position (Directive 92/77/EEC) was agreed by EU finance ministers voting in unanimity in 1992. This directive was signed on behalf of the UK government by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont MP.

PATRICIA MURTAGH
London SE11

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Sitting behind a huge glass screen in a darkened room, surrounded by plates of half-eaten sandwiches, warming beers and fetid colleagues, I have been staring for hours at you. I mean "you" collectively, you the readers. Yes, *The Independent* has fallen for the political and marketing fashion of the hour, the Focus Group. Over two nights, we watched sample groups of readers and non-readers pore over the paper, deride this page, cheer that one and answer questions such as: "If *The Independent* was a person/car, what sort of person would it be?" (John Cleese or Angus Deayton and a Saab, or VW Golf apparently.)

Mock at your peril: this sort of consenting voyeurism has helped give birth to New Labour and informs the thinking of everyone from magazine publishers to hair-conditioner manufacturers. As a result, I am pleased to announce, important improvements will follow shortly. *The Independent* is to change its name to "The Moderately Inoffensive". The eagle will go, to be replaced by a cuddly pink puppy; and all our papers will come in future with valuable nutrients and added absorbent qualities.

We report on our business pages today about the possibility of unearned income accruing to the policyholders of Scottish Amicable, as a result of the bid by Abbey National. Having missed out on every such windfall, I became excited: my only financial policy is to bank, invest and insure only with Scottish companies - and the more Scottish the better. This time, I was sure, I had to be a winner. Not so. After scrabbling in the desk, I seem to be insured with its tougher-minded but lesser-known rival, Scottish Misanthropic.

Few issues have divided our readers quite as much recently as the Royal Yacht, which I am by and large against and quite a few of you are for. Letters fiery, thoughtful, sarcastic and witty have been flying around, and some of the best have been printed over the past few days. But none was as straight to the point and as startling as

"The Independent" is to change its name to "The Moderately Inoffensive". The eagle will go, replaced by a cuddly pink puppy

Private Office, MoD, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB.

A cheerful lunch yesterday with Richard Branson, who is negotiating with Chris Evans for a radio show and is preparing a whole family of new products, from perfumes to jeans while planning his next attempt at round-the-world ballooning, yields the following story. We were gossiping about journalism and I wondered whether Branson, who began with a student magazine, had ever considered going into newspapers? As it happened, said Branson, on the day after *The Independent* had been launched, he had been approached by a friend and asked if he would consider buying it. He pondered, scrutinised it and replied that ... yes, he would. But he hadn't realised it was for sale. No, said his friend after a small pause - he meant would Branson consider buying a copy of *The Independent*.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

It is a relief to be out - Ellenor Hutson, 16, from Colchester, emerging after five days in a tunnel dug by protesters trying to stop work on the A30 road improvement scheme near Exeter.

The English have an incredible appetite for serfdom. They are unique in that they abolished slavery 150 years before they abolished serfdom - Norman Stone, retiring Professor of Modern History at Oxford University.

Sleaze is more than a lurid headline. It signifies the total collapse of public confidence in government and all its dealings - Derek Foster, shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Every decent Essex household has a garden gnome. Where I once had a beautiful porch, I have Lady Thatcher on the right and John Major on the left. Peering through the window is Kincock - Teresa Gorman, Tory MP.

One of those hassles in life is that no one understands the difference between a viscount and a lord - Viscount Thursto.

We often deride the popular press for being simplistic and vulgar, but it is so often an accurate barometer of the nation's mood. I shall certainly keep taking the tabloids - Lord Taylor of Warwick.

I am appalled by the flat ease with which my reputation as a scholar and my integrity as a human being is impugned - Professor Patricia Williams, of Columbia University, New York, this year's much-criticised BBC Reith Lecturer.

Why we should hail Swampy and friends as patriotic heroes

Sir: Your brief editorial nod (30 January) to the underground protests on the route of the A30, with its grudging admiration, fails to give proper recognition to the issues involved.

Swampy and his fellow tunnellers would be hailed as heroes if their passive and ingenious resistance to the road-building sickness were seen not as anarchic mischief but as a spirited defence of our land, our country. They have been putting their lives in danger to protect a strip of ordinary England from being lost for ever to tarmac, exhaust fumes and the inescapable roar of traffic.

BEN BYDAWELL
Tembury Wells, Worcestershire

Sir: You have made a serious error in giving so much prominence to the tunnellers protesting against the A30 road development.

I am sure that if the under-sheriff had overstepped the accepted boundaries of behaviour, the tunnellers and their supporters would be among the first to invoke the law. But, because they do not accept the proper planning decisions achieved by following all the lengthy procedures established by Parliament, we as taxpayers have to pay the bill for them to be evicted.

One cannot pick which laws to obey and which to defy. It is nonsense

for you to label these anarchic protesters heroes.

JIM MURPHY
Brussels

Sir: Your report on the latest Social Trends publication (30 January) states that "the British remain stubbornly wedded to their cars". This implies that car dependency is something deep in the British psyche. There is no need to be so fatalistic.

As you report elsewhere on the same day, one of the reasons car use has increased in the last fifteen years is that buses have become more expensive, more unreliable and less frequent as a result of deregulation. Car usage depends in part on decisions made by millions of individuals, but in part too on decisions made by government. One reason the Dutch cycle so much, for example, is because a Dutch government decided in the 1970s to improve provision for cyclists.

STEPHEN TINDALE
Director
The Green Alliance
London WC2

Sir: The under-sheriff of Devon may be right to say that he had no powers to negotiate with the A30 protesters, but he was wrong to call their demand for a new public inquiry into



Bicycles in Amsterdam: How government policy can wear us off our dependency on the car

the scheme "totally unacceptable" and "totally unrealistic" (reports, 27, 28 January).

This scheme, the Newbury by-pass, and all the other road-building proposals in the road programme were "justified" by reference to the impossibly high long-term traffic

forecasts made in 1989. The Government recently decided to support the Road Traffic Reduction Bill. Logic demands that it should now reassess the whole of its road programme.

STEPHEN FLOWDEN
London NW1

Hunger strikers' rights denied

Sir: The one piece of good news to have come out of the crisis over the hunger strikers is that the Government has decided not to detain asylum seekers on a second-hand American prison ship. That would have been even more awful than being locked up in Rochester prison.

However, hunger strikers by asylum detainees are not about the conditions of detention, but about the fact of detention. The vast majority of detained asylum seekers have not been brought before any court or been charged with any crime. There is no way in which the legality of their detention can be tested in the courts, and there is no limit on the time for which they may be held. The Home Office refuses to give written reasons for detaining them. They feel a deep sense of injustice.

M LOUISE PIROUET
Charter '87
Cambridge

Sir: As there is no vote in admitting some 5,000 stateless Indians from Hong Kong, your leading article "Our duty to give a home to Empire's orphans" (30 January) will fall on the deaf ears of the present Conservative government.

My organisation lobbied for this very cause some eight years ago and was given an emphatic "no" by Peter Lloyd, the then minister at the Home Office. However, Roy Hattersley, shadow Home Secretary at that time, in his reply to our lobbying, said: "I shall give Hong Kong residents of Indian descent, who would otherwise become stateless, a right of abode in the United Kingdom and eventually nationality."

Since then the present shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has given a commitment, during his visit in Hong Kong, to grant the stateless Indians the right of abode and eventual British citizenship if desired.

Our campaigning for the stateless Indians will bear fruit if a Labour government is returned.

TARAKUMAR MUKHERJEE
President
Confederation of Indian Organisations (UK)
London SE1

Sir: It is fortunate for certain members of the Cabinet that the present government was not in power when their grandparents landed in this country.

W K SMITH
High Peak, Derbyshire

What gospel?

Sir: The Virgin Birth, a Second Coming, miracles - all superstitious and anachronistic beliefs, according to the Rev Kenneth Wilson (letter, 29 January). Would he care to inform your readers what he understands by the "real gospel message", and on what he bases his Good News? Certainly not the Scriptures.

Professor D G BARNESLEY
Tisbury, Gloucestershire

Bottle-fed, but still eats his greens

Sir: Dr Laurence Villard (letter 28 January) says his children eat their greens because they were breast-fed and never had bottled babyfood. I have a son, now a strapping 23-year-old, who also eats his greens, and always has. I still recall hearing him, at the age of four, haranguing a friend because she did not like salad.

Unlike Dr Villard's children, he was bottle-fed and ate only prepared babyfoods, after making his views on my laboriously prepared home-purified dinners abundantly clear. However, like Dr Villard, we did, and still do, have meals together where possible, and they are still something of an occasion.

I suspect, however, that some children are just faddy by nature, and neither Dr Villard's remedies nor mine would make the least scrap of difference. I should know - I was one.

KIRSTEN ELLIOTT
Bath

Sir: I have always thought there was something a little odd about my 14-year-old son. Reading your newspaper has enlightened me: he likes all vegetables except parsnips, and activities such as Combined Cadet Force field days are meat and drink to him. I fear for his future - will he be a social outcast?

VIVIANNE LEVEND
Walsall, West Midlands

Hint from the Government: get out of that state school

Sir: In response to your leading article on education (27 January), I draw your attention to one of the more cruel aspects of selection and choice in our education system.

I recently came across a copy of the Government's guide to its supported places scheme, which funds private education for selected individuals who could not otherwise afford it. The front of the pamphlet suggested some criteria for parents to consider.

As I have a five-year-old son at school I was horrified to see, top of the list: "Is your child intelligent?" Does this mean that if my son is intelligent, the state system will probably fail him? The suggestion seems to be: "Get him out now

before too much damage is done."

The next thought was that my son's access to a "superior" education system is dependent on his intelligence, whereas for 99 per cent of private school pupils it is merely the size of the parents' wallet.

How can we continue to justify the privatisation of standards in education according to wealth?

ANDREW BARRINGTON
Harrow, Middlesex

Sir: "Popular schools which are oversubscribed will be given the resources to expand." ("Reading standards at low point", 27 January). This dreadful Conservative promise always omits the inevitable sequel:

"They will then become exceedingly large and impersonal and thus less popular."

And the corollary, too obvious for members of the Government to need to say at all: "Do not suggest expanding the public school which I used to attend, because this could alter its character."

For the last forty years, size, and with it bureaucracy, have increased steadily in secondary schools. If the Government's idea of a reward for success is a further increase in size, is it surprising that those who joined the teaching profession 30 or 40 years ago react by making for the exit?

IVOR CHAPMAN
London E17

More beds no cure-all for crisis in the mental health services

Sir: Marjorie Wallace of SANE (letter, 30 January) over-simplifies the situation in our mental health services. The solution to the problems highlighted in the recent Kings Fund report does not lie in opening more beds *per se*.

In Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham in south London, acute admission beds have remained stable in the last few years. The closure of the asylums has cut the back-ward beds which housed the old long-stay population, most of whom have been

resettled into supported accommodation in the community. However, what was not planned for was the "new long-stay" population - those who formerly would have been the candidates for the back wards which no longer exist. The evidence suggests that it is because of the lack of suitable facilities for this group that acute beds are blocked, leading to intolerably high occupancy levels.

There are, of course, two solutions to this problem. We can either go backwards and reopen long-stay beds

in asylums or we can go forwards by creating high-support units in the community that offer the chance of long-term rehabilitation. The second option is, of course, more expensive and my fear is that no political party is offering to make available the resources.

Marjorie Wallace's demand for more beds could lead us back down a path that we abandoned over 30 years ago.

TONY GOSS
London SE15

the saturday story

Swampy's University of Action

He emerged blinking and smiling after a week underground – hero, educator and the nation's favourite activist. By Louise Jury

Swampy emerged pale-faced and blinking into camera lights brighter than daylight after 167 hours underground.

Was it worth it? "Absolutely. It's the only way to get a voice. If I wrote a letter to my MP would I have achieved all this?" He gestured at the media scrum hanging on his every word. "I don't think so."

At 9.30pm on Thursday, nine days ago, Swampy, Animal, Muppet Dave, Ian and John dove into the labyrinth of tunnels at Fairmile near Honiton, Devon, to begin their protest at the proposed A30 extension scheme.

When 23-year-old Swampy (real name David Needs) became the last to give himself up after spending a week 35ft deep in the red Devon soil, he felt a point had been made.

He was right: DBFO – Design Build Finance and Operate – does not yet trip lightly off the tongue, yet the protesters' anger at this government road-funding arrangement has begun to inform discussions. Introduced two years ago, it means the new A30 road is being financed and constructed privately by a consortium called Connect which will be repaid by taxpayers over 30 years based on the number of cars using the road. It is a principle that the protesters claim will encourage car use. Moreover, how much it will actually cost is a commercial secret. Some estimates put the final bill at £200m.

The protesters calculated that straightforward demonstrations would not be enough. The enormous turn-outs against the Newbury bypass had highlighted the problem of environmental destruction and sparked a debate on roads. Only something even more dramatic would arouse interest in a bureaucratic road-funding system no one understood, particularly when played out in far-off rural Devon.

Enter Swampy. Arriving in the county two years ago, he set up camp and began to dig. "He just loved tunnels," said a fellow protester. "He lives and breathes the protest," added Karen, a regular at the New Fountain Inn in Whimple near the Allercombe and Fairmile camps where the small, softly spoken vegan would enjoy a drink with Anna, his student girlfriend from Exeter.

Digging like a mole at what became known as the "university of action" often left him dirty and smelly. But he would politely remove his muddy boots before entering the pub. So quiet and polite, he was determined in argument and while never completely winning all the locals round, they all liked him. Landlord Paul Mallett even allowed him to stay at the pub one particularly cold night. "You'd never worry about him nicking things," he said.

Local popularity turned to national stardom. When *The Independent* first talked to Swampy last October, no one outside the Green movement

had heard of him. But last week, as he dug deeper and deeper, spurring all the balliffs' appeals to come out, thwarting progress on removing the protest camp, he came to represent a struggle against roads which has won widespread public sympathy.

When the bulldozers tore through Twyford Down, the men and women who flung themselves in their path were seen as eco extremists, sentimental at best, more likely anti-democratic, anti-authoritarian crusties. But as the march of the bulldozer progressed, more and more of Middle England joined the protest.

So in Devon, even villagers who strongly support the new road, having long despaired of the dangerous bends on the old, seem sympathetic to the young protesters. "Swampy's made people think," Mr Mallett said.

The conventional approach seems to have failed, said a nurse from Exeter who was bringing supplies to the camp. "I've never taken part in protests and I'm too old to be doing what these youngsters are doing. But they've got my support."

If the members of the public calling the dozens of radio phone-ins where the matter has been discussed this week are anything to go by, even the protesters who are singing on the dole are not universally condemned. One company director said he paid thousands of pounds in taxes and VAT and was perfectly happy



for some of that money to go to those who had drawn attention to what was happening.

Yet the protest camp was illegal: the Under Sheriff of Devon has had court orders to evict the trespassers from three A30 camps – Allercombe, Trollheim and Fairmile – since October.

Allercombe went first, in a cleverly timed eviction on 27 December when many protesters had returned to families for Christmas. Trollheim was next with evictions on the weekend of the first anniversary of work beginning at Newbury, when the Under Sheriff knew that many of the Devon protesters would be at the Berkshire rally.

He moved into Fairmile mid-evening on Thursday last week while many of the protesters were in the Volunteer pub in nearby Ottery St Mary for a dole-cheque-day drink.

Only the moon lit the way as 100 men dressed all in black stepped soundlessly in each other's footsteps through the field to start the Fairmile eviction. At the head of the police, security guards and balliffs, the local gamekeeper, chosen for his knowledge of the terrain, carefully placed his hand on his hard helmet. As one, the line froze. A barn owl flew over. The men moved on.

It almost worked. But as they neared the heavily fortified camp above the equally well-defended labyrinth of tunnels,

they were spotted. The cry went up – "Aruga!" – the noise used to signal trouble on submarines. Protesters who had been hearing their staple diet of baked beans over a camp fire leapt up and ran.

On the site, the eviction force was laying ladders to reach the dry moat – the outer ring of the campaigners' defences. They were in. But the warning created enough of a delay to allow Swampy, Dave, Ian, John and 16-year-old Animal – the only woman – down the tunnels while others shined up the trees. Battle had begun.

Trained climbers were brought in to shin the trees, plucking the tree house protesters off one by one. The last, 21-year-old Craig, had been a security guard at Newbury who swapped sides, he claimed, in disgust at how the protesters were treated. He came down, he said, when it became clear the authorities intended starving him out.

But underground, food supplies were not a problem. After months of planning, candles, food, even books and bedding, were all in place. Starving the Fairmile Five out was not an option – at least not for weeks. The tunnellers risked more than empty stomachs. They were adamant that their elaborate underground, fortified network was safe. But the tunnels alarmed the Under Sher-

iff and his professional black-clad tunnellers known as Thunderbirds brought in to shore them up. As the soil dried out, the risk of collapse increased dramatically.

Although none of the protesters believed Swampy and the other four wanted to be martyrs, the risk, the balliff implied, was certainly there.

It was four days before the first of the five was captured. Jodie Woodhams, a 42-year-old builder from Wales, was tricked into reaching out for a newspaper said to have his photograph on the cover.

Within hours, fearful for the health of "Animal" – the 16-year-old Ellenor Hutson from Colchester, Essex – work began on chipping her free from a concrete block known as a "lock-on" to which she had chained herself.

This intelligent schoolgirl wooed all in sight on Tuesday when she explained in her articulate environmental patter: "I am a peaceful protester protecting the environment. I was arrested and treated as a criminal while the perpetrators of violence on that environment are financially rewarded by our government at the expense of the taxpayer." One newspaper offered her a column but she declined.

The wait went on for the

remaining three while protesters outside kept up morale with music and a programme of good-humoured "fluffification" – tickling the security guards with feather dusters. And so on Thursday with the previous underground protest record of six days broken, the siege began to draw to an end.

Muppet Dave, so named after his dog but whose real name is David Howarth, left his tunnel at 11.15am on Thursday after he was caught by balliffs men sinking a shaft to break in beneath the steel door where he was hiding. Ian Williamson came out at 3pm after negotiating a cigarette, a cup of coffee and a chance to talk to the press before being carted off for police questioning.

Only Swampy remained. The chief tunneller admitted it would be days before they could reach him in the tightly fitting "worm hole" he was still digging, disposing of the soil down a shaft beneath him. But with the A30 Action Group growing increasingly worried, two members spoke to him through the authority's communications line underground and Swampy agreed he would come out.

Telling the Sheriff's men to arrange for the press to greet him, so he could hammer home his message, he gathered his belongings into a Tesco bag, and emerged for a cup of coffee

and a phone call to his mum.

At the site yesterday, flicking sticks remained planted in the ground while the Under Sheriff's officers searched the underground labyrinth, making sure no one could be left inside. That work could take a week and then the land will be handed back to Connect and the last of the trees will fall as road-building starts.

The consortium had known when it won the contract last summer that the protesters would have to be evicted so they have always been prepared to wait. Security costs were built into their confidential contract with the Highways Agency. The £300,000 costs of policing by Devon and Cornwall officers will be borne by the Force itself.

Many of the protesters are now going home for a rest with their families. John Woodhams has two teenage children and a mortgage so is returning to his building trade. Animal may go on to a demo at Guildford, but she has to decide soon on taking up a sixth-form place kept open for her.

The tunnellers may be in demand at Manchester where the controversial airport extension is looking set to be another environmental battleground.

Meanwhile, as one of the Under Sheriff's men admitted: Swampy and Co are cult heroes.

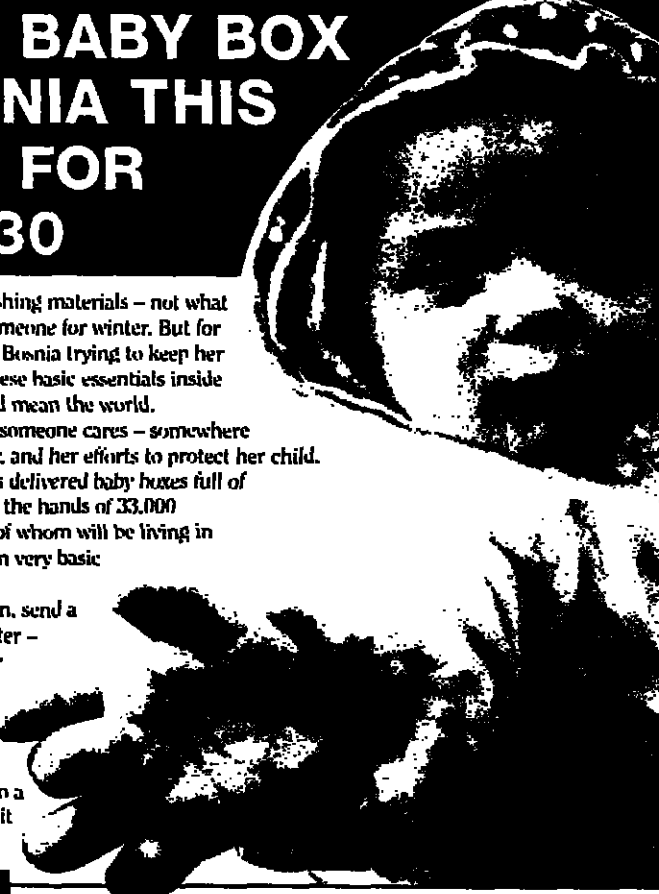
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Disinfectant, nappies, washing materials – not what you'd think of giving someone for winter. But for an impoverished mother in Bosnia trying to keep her child safe from infection, these basic essentials inside one of our baby boxes would mean the world.

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OR please complete and return this form. I enclose a cheque for £ (total amount) made payable to Children's Aid Direct OR please debit £ from my ☐ Visa ☐ Access ☐ Switch

Last three digits of Switch card no. / Switch home no.
 Empty date / Signature
 Name (s)
 Address
 Postcode
 Telephone

If you would like to send a message to a Bosnian mother, please send it with your donation and we will put it in your baby box. Please send to: Children's Aid Direct, Dept 508, FREEPOST, Reading, RG1 1BB.



jo brand's week

Australia Day was celebrated on television this week with a few Australian films and programmes which were introduced from some hall which appeared to be full of drunken blokes, most of whom were, I assume, Australian and looked as frightened as the characters who then popped up in *Mad Max*. The concept for the evening was the ubiquitous Jonathan Coleman, he of *Virgin Radio* and beer ads. He kicked off the evening by running us through some very basic history and mentioned the day that the British claimed Australia for their own, passing comment as he went, that it was not a great day for the Aboriginals. "Aha," I thought, "he is going to acknowledge the suffering those people went through." But, having made that statement, he just went on to say, "but enough of that" and moved on. Well, I'm sure the indigenous peoples of Australia must be so pleased that their entire tragic history was so eloquently and profoundly tackled. No wonder they feel that no one gives a toss.

Oh dear, two-thirds of Church of England vicars cannot remember the Ten Commandments and it seems that some of them can only remember two, which include "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Given the "randy vicar" stereotype, which has been with us for some time now, they must obviously be thinking about it a lot. It is a little worrying that something which should really be imprinted on their minds has somehow managed to leak out. It's not as if 10 is a particularly large number either. A former Archbishop of Canterbury remarked that they were just "caught on the hop". No wonder we're all falling apart morally if this mob can't even keep the most basic of God's rules in their heads.

I received a very strange letter from Brixton police station this week informing me – "Mr Joe Bryant" (who says the police aren't very good at spelling, or telling what sex you are, for that matter?) – that since my flat was burgled in 1991, there have been "developments". This letter was posted last July and had sat on the floor of my old flat since then. Needless to say, I'm having trouble contacting the

detective in question, but I am intrigued. The flat was burgled while I was in hospital suffering an allergic reaction to hair colour and doing a very reasonable impression of a 60-year-old Vietnamese woman with a very big face. Are my video and answeringphone coming home to me after all this time? Now that's what I call a fast clear-up rate.

Wonder if I've got enough time to lose some weight before Princess Diana's gear goes up for auction. I don't think I'll go for the Galliano dress that looks like a nightie. It makes me roar with laughter to see the glitterati so accepting, if not downright adoring, of the Princess turning up in

something not unlike my mum used to wear under her proper dress in the Sixties. Us stout birds will just have to wait until Fergie puts her old rags up for auction. I suppose I could go for that puffball dress and use it to wear to the shops to scare off schoolchildren.

In an attempt to recruit new nurses, advertisements to pull them in are going to take a warts-and-all approach. I must admit previous adverts have been a bit soft-focus and tended to concentrate rather too much on the "angel" aspect of nursing, which doesn't really exist. How can you remain an angel when most of your day is spent doing unpleasant and rather undignified things to bits of people most of us normally

don't see? I suspect that the huge numbers of individuals leaving nursing may well be something to do with the changing role of women, allied to the increased selfishness of our culture. Looking after people just ain't what it used to be, especially given, no doubt, that patients are so much more demanding these days.

Poor old Miss Universe is expanding at a rate unacceptable to all. She has put on nearly four stone over Christmas and is seriously in danger of having her title removed. So what has gone wrong? You can't blame her, really. With the title under her tightening belt, it must have been tempting to go on a damn good binge over the festive season. I put it down to enamel. Anyone with a half a brain must get bored to death being wheeled round talking cobbles and smiling for all you're worth. Let's hope Miss Universe has got a few vitamins into her body kick-started the old grey matter and realised what a ridiculous, antiquated and befuddling (sorry) farce she has been involved in. See you at the women's group, Miss U.



Betty, you

MD held regard the S blam press say Abr she get

anorak attack

We do not value our anuses as highly as we do our gobs and our genitals

david aaronovitch

Why is it that no-one wants to be anal? Of the phrases that Freud identified in child development (giving rise to the shorthand ways of describing different types of people), only the anal has a really bad reputation. When did you last hear someone complaining that a friend or spouse was so "phallic" or so "oral"? Both of these might be considered to be compliments, carrying with them either the hint of thrusting sexuality and interesting tumescence, or a capacity for sensual appreciation. Anal, however, means focused on the lower bowel, retentive, obsessive.

It could be that this is a simple associative problem caused by Freud's choice of words. This argument runs that we do not value our anuses as highly as we do our gobs and our genitals, and this disregard has become attached to those characteristics linked to anality. Had the great Viennese and his disciples decided that retention was to be linked to the phallus, all film stars and great people would happily admit to weekend tramping and silver-polishing.

Alas, anybody working in the field of psychometric testing will know that an entirely different descriptor still produces the same aversion. Almost everybody who is tested wants to be a "leader", an "innovator", or even, at a push, a "monitor". Few want to be "completers". The consoling sentiment that every good team needs a completer will rarely help.

"Why does it have to be me?" is the usual answer. We are terrified of boredom and of being boring. The only true path is that of the creator, the conjurer of bright lights. Extreme examples of leadership or of innovation are feared or admired - extreme examples of completion, of seeing the thing through, are considered laughable or contemptible.

Professor Les Woodcock, who this week completed a 22-year-long calculation, is one of the ultimate completers. Since 1975 (the year the Vietnam War ended, Steve Harley was No 1 - and there was a Labour government), Les had been trying to discover whether hexagonal close-packed

lattices were less stable than their crystal face-centred cousins. The answer, released this week, turned out to be triangle $S = 0.005R$. But even Woodcock admits that Woodcock's Solution was "not particularly useful as such".

Les now joins the pantheon of obstinate problem solvers, whose other deities include John Machin (who in 1706 calculated the value of π to 100 decimal points) and William Sacks (who in 1853 took it to 707, the last 179 of which were wrong).

Is this a sad nerd, then, worthy of comparison with men such as the miserable German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (who insisted on lecturing at exactly the same time as his more famous contemporary, Hegel, and thus for several years addressed an entirely empty lecture theatre)? And is this presumably a man whose company at the dinner party is to be avoided at all costs ("and what exactly does the triangle represent, Les?").

Not a bit of it. For Professor Woodcock does not turn out to be some crepuscular academic, sequestered from human society by the nature of his obsessions. Photographs do not show something soft with thick specs, blinking in the unexpected light of the day, but a fit, happy and young-looking chap. In addition to solving this nearly useless problem, he has also found time to help run a small sheep farm in the Dales, parent seven children and fill a place in his local pub's trivia quiz team. Les has a pretty full life. He is normal.

This may be the most frightening aspect of it all. Nicola Horlick was bad enough. She made a million, was bloody good at her job, had five kids, was very bright and, above all, was fantastically well organised. I am not even sure that her management of money made her more useful than Les. But she must have been anal. Compared with her and Les, the rest of us are chaotic anti-completers who see nothing through, who cannot master simple pieces of technology, add without calculators, read instruction manuals, make wills or listen to pension advice without falling asleep. We are carried by those we mock - the accountants and the anoraks. Up ours!

Norman's wisdom - and Turkey's delight

by James Cusick

Do historians still matter? Oxford's departing Professor of Modern History, Norman Stone, surrounded by the self-created chaos that followed the announcement he was leaving the dreaming spires for Turkish academe, believes that without history, "it would be as though there were an earth for everything rather than having a live wire somewhere." The electrical metaphor makes perfect sense. But throw in Stone himself as the live wire, the *enfant terrible*, the thorn in Oxford's crown whose bacchanalian high-wire act and unique form of populism has been in media demand since he took over Oxford's history helm in 1984, and there should be mourning that the British historical circus is losing one of its centre-ring performers.

At his home, with the telephone continually ringing, his answering machine spewing out urgent appeals from the Thames to the Bosphorus, an era is ending. He has just written a newspaper article about what is best about Britain. So what did he say? "I can't quite remember. I wrote it last night." A Sunday newspaper, as we speak, is being dispatched another epistle from the gospel according to Stone. A taxi is ordered to drive him to Eton, where he will pick up his son Rupert, and take them both to the British Museum where he will be interviewed by yet another paper. *Newsnight* phones. Another part of the BBC has just left. A Turkish journalist wants 10 minutes on the telephone.

Stone, aged 55, and looking far better than he should if his reputation is correct, has the ability to laugh amid this fourth-estate idolatry. He delivers yet another appropriate quotation - probably translated from his knowledge of eight languages - to capture the moment. His appointment to head a Russian-Turkish institute in Ankara will only take him away from Oxford for four months of the year. England is not completely waving goodbye to Professor Stone. So he laughs. "Only when your feet are in the stirrup, should you tell the truth to the horse."

As part of his valedictory to Oxford, Stone has chosen his final days for an impassioned attack on the institute that has been the vehicle for both his fame and notoriety. Graduate teaching is poor, dons are poorly paid. His shorthand is more precise: "Oxford is losing it." The same condensed speech is used to describe his views on Oxford's chancellor, Lord Jenkins. "I see him as having malevolent neutrality. I want bold gestures, but he is, well, a safe pair of hands." Stone's own bold gestures would see UDI at a number of the more high-profile colleges "and something needs to be done for research, higher post-graduate degrees".

As we speak, more chaos is



History professor Norman Stone, Thatcher pal and high-living right-wing media darling, waves a barbed goodbye to Oxford. Next stop Ankara Institute

pling up. A neighbour comes to the door. The family cat, Monty, has been tragically run over by a car. More media requests pour in. "I think it's time for a drink. Calvados OK?" The Dauphin Calvados is fine and warrants a probe into Stone's past record of heavy drinking, and the often cited accusation that academe has been partially sacrificed for worship on the altars of Fleet Street and television celebrity. Should there have been more *mea culpa*s, would he have done things differently? He admits: "I have to say, yes. I do recognise myself in these stories. And there were silly mistakes." He closes his eyes as he remembers one interview he gave to Zoe Heller of *The*

Independent on Sunday. He shrugs: "I shouldn't have opened that bottle of wine at 11.30 - am that is." For all Stone's excesses and media celebrity, it is too easy to overlook that he is still one of our finest analytical minds in the task of unravelling the meaning, if there is any, of the 20th century. The 1980s, with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and with Western Europe desperately trying to reinvent its *raison d'être*, placed Stone in the role of historical life-guard. If you were drowning for meaning, he could throw you assistance. He is still throwing. "Western Europe is like Legoland. It's just unreal. Women have effectively gone

on strike, by not having children." He quotes declining population statistics. So where will all this lead? "Oh, I think we'll all end up living in a more upmarket version of the Florida Everglades." These statements are given with a sense of mischief, and unless you understand this, you do not understand Norman Stone. Another photographer arrives. The professional study and its prominent pictures of the battle of Waterloo are abandoned in favour of coffee in the kitchen. Here a large poster advertising Margaret Thatcher's book *The Downing Street Years* adorns the walls. If you look for more fan club chit-chat, the exercise only gets more confusing. On the mantle

there are celebration coffee mugs for Charles and Diana, Churchill and Hillary Clinton. The connection would be a decent question for Paxman in *University Challenge*. So who will be rated from the 20th century? "Margaret Thatcher." The reply from Stone is the speed of a bullet.

"She may well be the last bit of English political culture given to the world." Stone is a premier-league Mrs T fan. He sits on the Thatcher Foundation. Throughout her reign he was a son of historico-moral adviser, giving the force of past wisdom to her vision of Britain's future. Here he chooses to give away a secret. "I wasn't quite a fan from the beginning. I wrote an article for *The Times* in 1981, after her first Budget which cut expenditure. I was very critical. But *The Times* [he breaks into laughter] spiked the article."

He admits to being "useless as a futurologist" but he is clear on what should happen to British politics and millennium government. "Democracy, if it makes any sense, means you occasionally have to let the other side in." Baroness Thatcher's own history man says quite categorically that "I hope the Labour Party will win. I'm rather impressed by Blair." John Major's regime is dismissed for its handling of Bosnia. He believes the British government effectively sided with the Serbian regime of Milosevic, calling this "the worst episode of British foreign policy since...". In anger, he almost doesn't finish. "It was unbelievable. And I don't see how any decent person could vote for Major."

Another quotation arrives as Stone is asked what should now happen to the Tories. The words of a Germanic prince from 1849 are recalled: "I hope for a little hanging. Perhaps clemency first, then a little hanging."

Born in Glasgow, a comment on another Glaswegian, the comedian Billy Connolly, brings more laughter. Connolly, a former shipyard worker, once said he was "a welder who had got away with it". Has Stone got away with it too? "I have to say that there is an element of truth in that." But he believes that Oxford got what it expected of him. He has become known outside the parochial cloisters, but accepts, in apology really, "it has not always been a comfortable business for them [his fellow dons] as I've been rude about Oxford. But overall they have been very kind to me."

Fortunately, it would be inappropriate to wave goodbye for too long. He is still writing and hopes the Turkish adventure to Bilkent University in Ankara will clear his thoughts for a final push at work on the 20th century. "In a way I'm glad I haven't written anything too grandiose yet. But I will write better. I'm sure of it."

Betty, your job is to sweep the gutter

Picture this scene. Question Time in the House on a blustery winter's afternoon. The boys are packed in shoulder to shoulder. Their grey uniforms are more or less in order, but the atmosphere is fractious.

Tony rises to his feet and points an accusing, twisted finger at John. "It's not our fault you can't run a half-way competent government!" he yells. His friends, huddled around him as if expecting violence, roar their approval. Some of their faces are so distorted that they look as if they might start to drool.

John's riposte draws a guttural squawk from his own side. They love this taunt, even though they've heard it dozens of times before. "You certainly don't want the education that you yourself have enjoyed!" he shouts, gleeful but irrelevant.

Just another day in the Mother of Parliaments. But what makes today different is what happens after the chief wanker and the head boy have sat down. Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, rises to her feet, who begins berating the press, who are sitting neatly above her head. It has been brought to her notice, she says, that the media have been talking about sleaze as if it were rife in the House.



MPs are held in low regard, and the Speaker blames the press. But, says Fran Abrams, she should get real

But the vast majority of members are decent, honourable people. Why, Parliament even acts as a school for fledgling democrats from all over the world!

Betty, I have something to say to you, and I am going to try very hard not to say it in unparliamentary language. Come off it! Get real! As Jim McDonald from *Coronation Street* would say: "Catch yourself on."

You're right about one thing. Journalists probably are missing the point when they dig around in one or two small, murky holes and conclude that the whole political process is tainted by their smell.

The stench that pervades the House of Commons is far more powerful than that. It's the smell of years of male domination and entrenched social attitudes. The smell of petty power games and ritualistic confrontation. The smell of oily sycophancy, of backroom deals, of the failure even to begin to search for truth.

The real dishonesty in our democratic process has nothing to do with brown envelopes handed over in shady bars. It doesn't even stem directly from the activities of the lobbyists who circle the Palace of Westminster like wolves. It's just here. It seeps out of every pore of the time-worn stonework and it

infects almost everyone who inhabits this place.

I say this now, two months after arriving, because I know it will not be much longer before I, too, cease to notice. Before I stop wondering what people here mean when they talk about democracy.

Of course, none of this would matter much if the place was doing its job properly. It wouldn't matter that a senior woman MP sneaks into the chamber from behind the Speaker's chair because she finds the place so intimidating. It wouldn't matter that journalists gain most of their information through off-the-record briefings from people who haven't got the courage of their convictions.

But the fact is that these surface irritations mask a far deeper malaise. The opposition - here, one assumes naively, to oppose - are barely doing anything of the sort. What happens time after time is that ministers propose legislation, the opposition say they dislike some of it, then the parliamentary arithmetic looks rosey so the two sides get together and stitch up a deal. The opposition wins some concessions, the Government gets its legislation through without delays and a few contentious clauses are left to give the impression that a real, open debate has gone on. And every-

one goes home happy. Don't bother looking for real opposition, real information-gathering, in the sea of paperwork washing through the place either. In the inches-thick daily wave of ministers' written answers to MPs' questions you find evasion after stock evasion. "Not available in the form requested." "Could only be supplied at disproportionate cost." "Not held centrally." And increasingly, "Not a matter for this department," because it has been farmed out to an arm's-length agency. Do you remember what happened, Betty, just after you made your statement the other day? I'm sure you do because you had to shout over the hubbub to make yourself heard. Pantomime over, the honourable members headed en masse for the doors. A few moments later the expanses of green leather banquettes were high-on empty.

Most debates feature a dozen or so MPs along with a minister jolling, bored and half-awake, on the front bench. People wander in, make speeches and wander out again. Then when the division bell rings they all roll out of the bars, restaurants and tea rooms to vote as per instructions. Half the time most of them haven't heard a single word of the argument. These things matter because

when things go wrong, the checks and balances don't seem to work. What happened to the sweeping changes we thought would result from the Nolan report on standards in public life? The Scott report on arms to Iraq? A few days of furore, then everyone settled back into their comfortable routine.

The saddest thing, though, is that I don't think I ever really expected it to be any different. Like most reasonably well-informed members of the public, I regarded my MP not as someone through whom I and my fellow constituents could express our views but as an agent of his party.

That's why I and thousands of others like me don't get involved - because we don't think we can make a difference. Why 30 per cent of Oxbridge undergraduates say they won't even vote. Why nothing ever changes. Betty Boothroyd was wrong to say what she did the other day. Of course there are people in the House who are swimming against the tide, but the Speaker seems to have failed to notice the fact that the current is going in the wrong direction.

All of us are in the gutter, of course, but more of us should be looking at the stars. And as for you, Betty, aren't you one of the people whose job it is to keep the gutter clean?

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TV triumvirate aims for 1 million viewers in three years

Michael Harrison

British Digital Broadcasting, the new terrestrial television company launched yesterday by Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, Granada and Carlton, is aiming to capture at least 1 million subscribers in its first three years, provided it wins the right to begin services from next summer.

The new television grouping will also provide the BBC with a lucrative platform for its venture into subscription television with Flextech by taking four of

the joint venture's channels at premium rates.

As news emerged of BDB's bid for three of the four "multiplexes" or blocks of frequency being offered by the Independent Television Commission, shares in the three companies soared. Each will have a one-third stake in the company and will share evenly in its £300m investment programme to get the new terrestrial digital up and running.

However, BDB is facing competition from Britain's third biggest cable operator, the US-

owned International CableTel, which has formed a rival company Digital Television Network, to bid for the same three multiplexes. DNT is promising a top class line up of film, sport, entertainment, money and factual channels with the back up of ITN, Hollywood studios and specialist producers.

The cable industry also served notice that it could mount an objection to BDB's programme line-up on the grounds that BSkyB was offering its channels in a way that dis-

criminated unfairly against cable television companies.

The three television companies behind BDB have been preparing their bid for four months after Rupert Murdoch at BSkyB, Granada's Gerry Robinson and Carlton's Michael Green came together in a "meeting of minds" last autumn. Together they pose a formidable combination. Carlton is Britain's biggest terrestrial television company owning the Carlton, Central and West-County Television franchises. Granada owns London Week-

end Television in addition to its own North-west franchise and BSkyB is the world's biggest pay satellite TV operator with 6 million subscribers.

BDB will offer 15 pay channels - 12 of them in a basic subscription package and three premium subscription channels, Sky Sports, the Movie Channel and Sky Movies. Analysts estimate that the cost of the basic service will be £10-£12 a month while the premium channels are likely to cost another £3 each.

It has yet to be decided whether the Sky Sports channel will automatically show live Premiership football action, prompting speculation that its launch on digital could coincide with a new pay-per-view deal with the leading clubs.

Nigel Walmsley, director of broadcasting at Carlton and one of BDB's six directors, refused to be drawn on its detailed business plans. But he said that the company aimed to be in profit after five years and would market aggressively to bring in

subscribers who do not yet take pay television.

"Our plans are based on the three-quarters of British homes that do not have subscription TV. That is a market of 16 million homes which means there are an enormous number of people who could be drawn to multi-channel viewing by digital terrestrial television."

BDB hopes that viewers will be attracted by not requiring a satellite dish or a new set to receive digital television - just a "plug in and watch" set-top box

which is expected to cost about £200-£300. Eventually, television incorporating integrated digital technology will be available, costing only £200 more than conventional sets, Mr Walmsley said. "We are satisfied that we can deliver the equipment that is needed at the time and in the volumes it will be required."

BDB said that if successful, it could start serving over 70 per cent of the population from the middle of next year, rising to 90 per cent by the end of 1999.

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Abbey National makes £1.4bn ScotAm offer

Nic Ciuttu

Personal Finance Editor

Scottish Amicable's plans for a stock market flotation hit the buffers yesterday as Abbey National launched a surprise takeover offer worth up to £1.4bn, prompting speculation of a bidding war among rival suitors.

Abbey's offer trumped analysts' estimates of the value of the mutually owned life company, leading many to suggest that a takeover of ScotAm was a racing certainty.

ScotAm executives, including Sandy Stewart, the chairman, plus Roy Nicholson and Paul Bradshaw, the chief executive and deputy, were yesterday locked in emergency meetings with advisers SBC Warburg in a bid to avoid falling into Abbey's hands.

However, Charles Landa, insurance analyst at SG Strauss Turnbull, described Abbey National's offer as a "no-brainer" for Scottish Amicable's 1.1 million policyholders who are eligible to vote on the deal. "This offer cashes up front, without having to wait several years for it."

It also emerged that three investment trusts investing in Scottish Amicable with profits policies could hold the key to a

potential special meeting of rebel policyholders if ScotAm does not enter into serious talks with Abbey or other bidders.

Abbey's offer for ScotAm involves an immediate payment of at least £400m in cash or shares, more than five times the £75m the life office was proposing to make available in bonuses to policies.

In addition, Abbey said it would be willing to make a further investment of between £700m and £1bn to buy the embedded value of the ScotAm life fund. This would be based on detailed actuarial calculations.

ScotAm was quick to denounce the bid as both "vague" and "inadequate" and said it intended to press ahead with its two-stage plans.

Mr Stewart said: "If we have on the table a firm offer which is quite clearly likely to be more beneficial to policyholders than we have to consider it. At this stage the bid doesn't meet our requirements."

ScotAm's own proposals, which it insisted last night would still be put to members in a proxy postal vote within the next few days, involve a £500m cash injection by Swiss Re, the reinsurer, plus a further £45m from its jointly owned venture capital arm Securitas.

In return for the £75m, policyholders are expected to abandon mutual status.

A flotation in three to five years' time would net policyholders between £200m and £400m more, ScotAm's directors would receive share bonuses worth up to £14.4m.

Charles Toner, deputy chief executive at Abbey National, said: "We would be willing to go into detailed talks on our offer, which we believe is better than the uncertainty of ScotAm's own flotation proposals in three to five years' time."

"We believe ScotAm is a good company, with room for improvement. We have shown that we can provide commercial discipline with our takeover five years ago of Scottish Mutual."

Scottish Mutual, he added, has quadrupled its funds under management to £8bn, while its 1996 results show an 81 per cent increase in total net premium income.

Mr Toner said the two life companies' proximity, in or near Glasgow, meant there was scope for close collaboration between them. He stressed that ScotAm's new offices in Stirling would stay open. No redundancies were planned.

Roman Cizdyn, insurance analyst at Merrill Lynch, said:



Rearguard action: Sandy Stewart, the Scottish Amicable chairman, was yesterday locked in emergency meetings with the advisers SBC Warburg in an attempt to thwart an Abbey takeover

"This has been very cleverly done by Abbey National. The offer is up front and it appears to come close to the valuation that ScotAm had placed on the company in several years' time. If I were ScotAm I would be wondering if there will be a white knight coming to the rescue."

Among potential rivals named by analysts are Prudential and Allianz, the German insurance giant. A Prudential spokesman said the company was watching developments "with interest".

Alan Richards, a director at First Marathon, a new corporate finance house, said: "ScotAm will find it very difficult to get round this one. What one

should bear in mind is that it is vulnerable to policyholder pressure. It only needs 50 to call a meeting and demand that the matter be put to a vote."

The meeting would have to take place within 28 days, even if ScotAm ballots members on its proposals.

Comment, page 23

Fidelity faces SFA penalty for poor service

Jill Treanor

Banking Correspondent

Fidelity Brokerage Services, the UK private client stockbroker arm of the giant US fund management group, will be disciplined by the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the industry regulator, over the poor service it has been giving to customers.

The SFA also said yesterday it was extending a ban on the firm taking in any new business until the end of April. The ban was first imposed last October and was due to end yesterday.

The regulator will not decide the size of its financial penalty against Fidelity Brokerage Services (FBS) until all the difficulties have been resolved.

The highly unusual action by the SFA followed complaints from clients after FBS introduced a new computer system last April. The computer problems resulted in delays with share dividend payments and the quarterly income payment into self-select personal equity plans. There were also delays in mailing clients' statements, some of which contained incorrect information.

Some complaints remain unresolved although FBS has started to pay compensation to some of its 30,000 clients. Phil West, marketing manager at FBS, declined to give precise details of the amount paid but said it was "significantly smaller" than the £1m mentioned in some reports.

Compensation which had been paid to date was generally of the order of tens of pounds to each client rather than thousands, Mr West said.

The SFA said: "Good progress has been made, but further work is still required before the SFA can be confident that Fidelity Brokerage Services is offering a level of customer service which is consistently satisfactory."

During the period of the extended ban the SFA said it would monitor the customer service performance of FBS and oversee the resolution of outstanding customer complaints and enquiries.

"SFA has, in addition, placed FBS on notice that it intends to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the firm when the outstanding issues are finally resolved to the satisfaction of the authority," the SFA said.

In setting the penalty, the SFA said it would take into account the speed with which FBS dealt with the outstanding matters. The SFA said it was satisfied that FBS had adequate resources and backing to ensure investors' money and securities were not in jeopardy.

"We've made very good progress but we do recognise that there's work to be done," Mr West said.

He said FBS had significantly reduced the number of complaints - 850 clients complained originally - and upgraded the computer software.

Southern takes up Ziff scheme

Chris Godsmark

Business Correspondent

The creator of an ingenious alternative to share buy-back schemes, enabling companies to hand back hundreds of millions of pounds to investors without falling foul of new tax rules, is thought to have "sold" his idea in principle to at least two more large businesses.

As news of the two possible forthcoming cash windfalls emerged yesterday, Southern Electric, the regional electricity supplier, announced plans to adopt the scheme, handing back £15m to shareholders.

Southern is the second privatised utility to take up the advice of City of London investment bankers SBC Warburg, which was replaced as its broker last year. On Thursday Yorkshire Water stirred up further controversy by proposing to return £145m to its investors.

The scheme was devised by Max Ziff at SBC Warburg, the investment bank, after the Government changed the tax rules on share buy-backs last October. Mr Ziff, 38, had previously advised Northern Electric during its infamous "scorched

earth" defence of the takeover bid from Trafalgar House.

The two companies most interested in Mr Ziff's latest idea are not thought to be utilities. However, he confirmed he had approached other privatised utilities which have not yet carried out share buy-backs.

Shares in Southern rose 13p to 800.5p yesterday. The surge followed a 16p rise the previous day after speculation about a buy-back. The arrangement involves Southern replacing every 100 existing shares with 184 new ordinary shares and 200 "B" shares. The company will then buy back all the B shares for 30p each, giving investors 60p in cash for each existing share they hold. The capital raising will raise the company's gearing from around 10 per cent to some 40 per cent. In addition, Southern pledged yesterday that its dividend would remain unchanged, forecasting a final payout to shareholders of 30.1p, or 15.05p for each of the new ordinary shares.

Ian Marchant, Southern Electric's finance director, said one big advantage was that all shareholders would benefit.

Investment column, page 23

Pound suffers a fresh battering but shares soar

Diane Coyle

Economics Editor

The pound was battered down to its lowest level for more than a month on the foreign exchange markets yesterday.

But the stock market took heart from the exchange rate weakness, with the FTSE 100 index ending more than 47 points higher at a record 4,275.8.

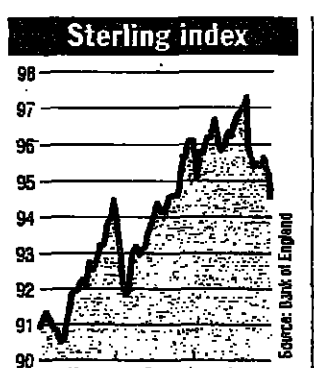
Sterling's index against a range of currencies closed 0.3 points lower at 94.4. It has lost more than two pence against the German mark in 24 hours. Dealers blamed the pound's renewed decline on a combination of expectations that Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, will not raise base rates after the monthly monetary meeting on Wednesday and fears that the Federal Reserve might increase US rates after its Open Market Committee meets on Tuesday and Wednesday. These were fuelled by figures yesterday showing that the American economy

grew at a steamy pace in the final quarter of last year.

"The pound's higher level was buoyed by speculative inflows. That hot money is now going elsewhere," said Paul Lambert, a currency analyst at the investment bank UBS. He added that the Toyota president Hiroshi Okuda's warning earlier this week about future investment in Britain if the pound stayed out of the single currency had also led to sales of the pound for yen.

The paradox in sterling's very recent weakness is that if it goes much further it will deprive the Chancellor of his best excuse for not taking Bank of England advice to increase the cost of borrowing. The Bank's Governor, Eddie George, has become increasingly forthright in saying this is needed if inflation is to hit the Government's 2.5 per cent target.

The sterling index ended yesterday less than 4 per cent above its level when the Bank drew up its last quarterly inflation Report, when it started arguing for rates to go up. The



next report is due on 12 February.

David Coleman, chief economist at CIBC Wood Gundy in London, warned that Mr Clarke's resistance might suit his electoral needs but held dangers for sterling. "Once the market thinks Clarke is behind the game, the game is up," he said.

Figures yesterday showed America's GDP growth rebounded in the final quarter of last year. This tilted Wall Street analysts towards the view that Alan Greenspan, Fed Chairman, will favour a tighter interest rate policy, even though most believe an erratically strong trade performance boosted the economy at the end of last year.

The US economy expanded at an annual rate of 4.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1996, a much faster pace than economists had expected. Consumer spending picked up strongly. In addition, exports surged while growth in imports slowed down.

Banks fear 'Trojan Horse' supermarkets

Nigel Cope

Concerns are growing in the banking industry that the decision by the high-street banks to form joint ventures with the supermarket groups could be allowing a Trojan Horse into the sector. According to research by Kleinwort Benson, the super-markets are likely to dump their banking partners if their schemes become successful, choosing to operate the services themselves instead.

Banks such as NatWest, Abbey National and Bank of Scotland, which have signed joint ventures with Tesco, Safeway and Sainsbury's respectively, could find that they have provided support for a powerful new group of competitors that could de-stabilise the sector by exerting pricing pressure.

The report adds that the introduction of well-branded new entrants could be dangerous, given the relatively weak brand names of the high-street banks.

Kleinwort's Simon Samuels who wrote the report says: "Long-term these supermarket link-ups are bad news for the banking industry. It is quite likely that the supermarkets will

choose to go it alone if the idea works. All the banks will have gained a fee for running the accounts."

The mechanism for supermarkets to oust the banks from their partnerships is already in place in some cases. A little known clause in Sainsbury's contract with Bank of Scotland enables the supermarket group forcibly to buy out the bank's stake after a certain period.

Bank of Scotland has already been jilted twice by joint venture partners in similar circumstances. It was the joint venture partner with Marks & Spencer when the high street giant first entered the financial services products. M&S later bought the bank out. When Bank of Scotland co-operated with the Halifax Building Society over the launch of a credit card it suffered a similar fate.

The report expressed concerns over NatWest's deal with Tesco as "it gives a new competitor a relatively easy entry into banking". The view among banking analysts is that NatWest agreed the deal because it felt that if NatWest did not do it, then someone else

would, possibly an overseas group keen to gain a foothold in the UK market.

The report also includes forecasts for customers numbers and profits for the various supermarket banks. It says that around 10 per cent of Sainsbury's 12 million customers are likely to sign up for the Sainsbury's Bank when it is launched in the next two months. This would give the fledgling operation 1.2m accounts. Pre-tax profits could reach £28.4m after three years.

Assuming a similar take-up from the other supermarkets, Safeway could have 550,000 customers and profits of £13m from financial services. Tesco would have 1m account holders yielding profits of £24m.

Tesco is already looking to extend the range of financial services with a branded credit card the next step. Other plans being considered are mortgages and personal lending.

It is understood that Abbey National is considering opening small "kiosk" banks in branches of Safeway. This would follow similar operations in America where Wells Fargo and ANZ have in-store branches.

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)	Dividend	Dividend Yield (%)	Vol
FTSE 100	4275.8	+40.90	+0.95	4271.50	3632.30	3.86			
FTSE 250	4572.60	+49.10	+1.07	4615.00	4015.90	3.41			
FTSE 350	2034.70	+45.70	+2.28	2115.00	1816.60	3.61			
FTSE SmallCap	2297.62	+45.45	+2.02	2327.62	1954.06	2.95			
FTSE All-Share	2068.15	+45.34	+2.22	2087.11	1791.95	3.55			
New York	6823.85	+83.12	+1.22	6883.80	5032.94	1.99			
Tokyo	17894.04	-471.28	-2.64	22668.80	17303.85	0.891			
Hong Kong	13268.40	+2.97	+0.02	13888.24	10204.87	3.181			
Frankfurt	3017.32	+16.12	+0.53	3033.46	2253.36	1.581			

Statistics as of 31 January

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling*					UK medium gilt				
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Index	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year
UK	6.13	6.75	7.51	7.46	7.59	7.63			
US	5.37	6.88	6.61	6.05	5.90	6.05			
Japan	4.33	0.41	2.38	1.95					
Germany	3.06	3.06	5.80	5.87	5.65				

*Bankers' bid

CURRENCIES									
£/\$				£/DM				£/¥	
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
£/\$	1.6145	-0.49c	1.5131	£/DM	0.6184	-0.17	0.6609	£/¥	161.35
\$/£	0.6194	+0.65c	1.5205	DM/£	1.6344	-0.42p	1.4932	¥/£	121.74
DM/£	1.6344	-0.42p	1.4932	£/¥	161.35	-0.06	161.35	DM/\$	0.6184
¥/£	121.74	+0.16p	121.74	DM/\$	0.6184	-0.17	0.6609	£/¥	161.35
DM/\$	0.6184	-0.17	0.6609	£/¥	161.35	-0.06	161.35	DM/¥	102.11
£/¥	161.35	-0.06	161.35	DM/¥	102.11	+0.08	102.11	£/DM	0.6184

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Source: Bank of England and Reuters

Judgment reserved on Forsyth conviction

The Court of Appeal yesterday reserved judgment on Elizabeth Forsyth's conviction for laundering £400,000 of stolen funds from Polly Peck, the fruit to electronics group that was run by the fugitive Asil Nadir and which collapsed in 1990.

The 60-year-old grandmother, who was an aide of Nadir's, walked free on Thursday after completing less than one year of a five-year sentence handed down last year. A jury convicted her last March of handling of stolen funds. She was granted bail after

the Court of Appeal ruled that her sentence was "disproportionate".

She has spent the last two days appealing against her sentence and her conviction.

"We desire to reserve our judgment in this matter... we will give our decision as soon as we can," Lord Justice Beldam, one of the three appeal court judges, said yesterday.

Lord Justice Beldam said her bail would continue and indicated that whatever the result of their ruling on her conviction, Forsyth would not return to jail.

السؤال من الامتحان



COMMENT

'By sharing the set-top box with Granada and Carlton, and then inviting the world's best public service broadcaster to supply programming, he has neatly side-stepped the accusation that BSkyB wanted to hold everyone else to ransom'

Everyone gains, but Murdoch gains the most

The battle of the set-top box is over, at least for now. Yesterday's announcement that BSkyB is joining forces with Granada, Carlton and the BBC to launch a digital terrestrial television service ensures for the time being that Rupert Murdoch will not be the sole gatekeeper to the new age of broadcast entertainment and information.

Mr Murdoch did not need to climb into bed with three of his biggest rivals to create British Digital Broadcasting. BSkyB is pressing ahead with its own plans to launch 200 digital satellite television channels this autumn — more than enough to swamp the 30 that will be available on its smaller terrestrial brother.

But by sharing the set-top box with Gerry Robinson at Granada and Carlton's Michael Green and then inviting the world's best public service broadcaster to supply programming, he has neatly side-stepped the accusation that BSkyB wanted to hold everyone else to ransom by controlling access to a mass entertainment market.

The signs of relief from Whitehall were almost audible, not least from the Science and Technology Minister, Ian Taylor. The Jeremiahs who said digital would be monopolised by one company and one platform had been proved wrong, he declared.

Well, perhaps. But it is certain that, if not a monopoly, then digital television will remain the province of an oligopoly for the foreseeable future. Even that requires some heroic assumptions. One is that the creative,

commercial and financial tensions that have brought BDB together will not just as easily tear it apart, leaving Mr Murdoch still holding the encryption technology fast to his breast when everyone else has departed.

A second is that there will be more than one provider in the "commercial" sector of the digital market. When bids closed at noon yesterday for the four "multiplexes" or blocks of frequency being offered by the Independent Television Commission, there was only one other taker. International CableTel may be a reputable player but it is on its own, erstwhile partners like Lord Hollick's United News having pulled out as word spread that Mr Murdoch was in town.

A third assumption is that public service broadcasters like the BBC will attack the market with gusto, perhaps by launching pay channels in their own right.

Finally, we have to rely on BDB's set-top boxes being accessible on open, fair and reasonable terms to other broadcasters, and the regulatory system being capable of preventing any abuse of this conditional access.

What will digital terrestrial television actually mean for the viewer and the provider? For the viewer it will bring forward the day when subscription television enters every living room in the country. Television sets will come fitted with the technology that allows sport or films to be viewed on a pay-as-you-go basis. Just plug in and watch, and all without that ugly dish on the outside wall.

The market is huge and untapped —

barely a quarter of homes have subscription TV. BSkyB must calculate that once viewers have tasted digital terrestrial they will migrate to its own digital satellite service where the real killing is to be made. Why, you ask, would anyone want another 200 channels at their disposal when they have already got 30 to choose from, half of which will be free? The answer lies in how that satellite capacity will be used. Forget about imported US sitcoms, drama repeats and game shows. Those 200 channels will be used to pump Hollywood blockbusters or live action sport into the home on a pay-per-view basis. An easier option than a trip to the video store or local stadium and a big money spinner for BSkyB.

Of course, everyone else stands to gain as well. Carlton and Granada get another outlet for their pay channels and the BBC and Finetech get paid handsomely for the new channels they are jointly developing. But, as ever, the biggest winner will be Mr Murdoch. He will neutralise the political and commercial opposition and form a bridgehead between the two halves of his digital empire. And all for an outlay of £100m — small change by BSkyB's standards.

The Scottish Amicable board was already covered in the brown stuff and now it is digging itself even deeper into the ground. Denying 1.1 million policyholders an opportunity to consider an offer from Abbey

National that is almost certainly better than the one made by their own board is neither friendly nor, to borrow another phrase popular among life companies, equitable.

Since it would only take 50 of the 1.1 million to requisition a special general meeting, the board could quickly find itself forced by a vote to put the Abbey proposal to members anyway. Any one of the three City investment trusts that have bought up portfolios of ScotAm policies could force a vote.

Unless there is a change of heart soon, it will be hard to avoid the conclusion that this head in the sand attitude has as much to do with the £14m incentive package the board is proposing for itself as with the financial arithmetic of the competing proposals.

The problem for ScotAm in beating an outside bidder is the special way in which mutual insurers traditionally operate.

Building societies do not distribute their profits to members, and have built up huge and valuable reserves. There are therefore plenty of funds to bribe members to vote in favour of conversion.

But mutual insurers hand their profits to their policyholders as they go along, as bonuses, and keep back only the working capital needed to run the business, leaving little in the way of a cash fund.

So how does ScotAm find £75m up front to compensate its policyholders for giving up their ownership of the organisation, plus another £200m on flotation?

It is hard to be precise about where the

money will come from, in the absence of the detailed documentation, which will show how Swiss Re and Securitas will acquire their proposed 20 per cent stake in the business. But you cannot get something for nothing. The likelihood is that much of the payments will be financed by future policyholders, who will receive lower bonuses.

In other words, ScotAm appears to be doing no more than promising to pay future profits from its life business up front. There is no money to pay anything for goodwill.

It is this that gives an outsider such as Abbey National an almost unbeatable advantage. Abbey believes there is synergy with its own business, and says it is worth its while paying £400m in goodwill. (The other £700m — £1bn in its offer simply replaces working capital and cannot be distributed to policyholders.)

To persuade members to accept its own plan, the ScotAm board is promising to make the company more efficient after demutualisation, and therefore more valuable when it is eventually floated on the stock exchange.

But this is largely the same management that has piloted the company down the league tables of returns to policyholders in the last few years, so the claim has to be taken with a large pinch of salt. Having publicly admitted that it no longer favours mutualism, ScotAm now has no alternative but to auction itself off to the highest bidder.

World Economic Forum: Bank of England Deputy Governor calls for global measures to safeguard against risk

Davies tells banks to 'stress test' portfolios

Jeremy Warner
Davos, Switzerland

Banks and other financial institutions are being urged by the Bank of England to add a new form of risk assessment — "stress testing" — to the welter of different tools already used to ensure financial prudence in their affairs.

Howard Davies, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, said yesterday the next step in the provision of safeguards to prevent banking collapses "is for banks to develop models of market risk which allow them to calculate regulatory capital charges and to stress test their portfolios".

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Mr Davies said the possibility of financial crisis in Japan or a delay in plans for monetary union in Europe as examples of where banks need to be assessing their exposure to future market events.

"Banks need to know how they would be affected by different possible market scenarios," he said at a seminar on financial fragility. Afterwards, Mr Davies said that the Bank had discovered several cases in the City of financial institutions whose pay structures had a tendency to encourage excessive risk taking by traders and other employees.

The Bank of England is planning to publish the results of an in-depth study of pay and risk taking in the City within the next few weeks. Mr Davies stressed that this was not an attempt to interfere in how investment banks remunerate their employees. However, if remuneration policy was shown to be encouraging undue risks, then

the Bank might take it into account in setting capital adequacy levels or through other channels of banking supervision.

Mr Davies insisted good progress was being made in setting up a "common language of risk" which operated across different jurisdictions. Banking supervisors had now provided, through capital charges, an incentive for banks to hedge their exposures to individual price moves and to focus on the degree of diversification in their portfolios.

However, most of this risk assessment was "backward" looking in its effect; banks needed to be encouraged to look at future risk as well. "Today banks should be asking themselves how they would be affected by a financial crisis in Japan or by a decision not to proceed with Economic and Monetary Union on the current timetable."

Convergence in European bond markets was one possible danger point, he said. If convergence is being driven largely by political factors and the expectation of EMU, there could be an extreme reaction if EMU does not happen on time, or some nations that have benefited from the convergence trend are excluded from the first wave.

At the same seminar, Andrew Crockett, general manager of the Bank for International Settlements, said that banking supervision and risk management was now being set internationally on the basis that there would be no state bail outs when a bank runs into difficulties.

Only in extreme circumstances when a collapse shows signs of causing wider danger to the international financial system, could central bankers and governments be expected to step in.



Russia's Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin (above), told Davos delegates yesterday that President Boris Yeltsin was "unswervingly" committed to the second stage of reforms that have yet to see Russia achieve economic

growth since abandoning Communism. Last year, Russian national output dropped by 6 per cent following a 4 per cent decline in 1995. Russia has been in recession for the past five years. The Russian Economy Minister, Yevgeny

Yasin, said the economy was still failing to improve. "Production is still in a slump." His reform programme includes big reductions in spending, including deep cuts in housing and community subsidies.

'G7 must address currency stability'

A senior US economist yesterday called on the Group of Seven, the world's leading industrialised nations, to address as a matter of urgency the idea of a world-wide stability pact for currencies, writes Jeremy Warner.

Fred Bergsten, director of the US based Institute for International Economics, said that "competitive devaluation" of currencies in Europe ahead of European Monetary Union (EMU) and the real possibility of a collapse in the yen had made immediate discussion of a stability pact a necessity and he urged the Group of Seven

to give consideration to the idea when they meet in Berlin next week.

However, British officials in Davos, where Mr Bergsten was speaking, downplayed the idea. Discussion of currencies would be close to the top of the agenda in Berlin, they said, but they added that consideration of target zones for currencies, supported by central bank intervention and co-ordinated national economic policies, was thought highly unlikely.

Lawrence Summers, the US deputy Treasury Secretary, also seemed to consider the idea

fanciful and dismissed Mr Bergsten's comments as "provocative, as usual".

Kosaku Inaba, chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, considered the possibility of a further prolonged slide in the yen unlikely.

The yen's recent weakness was helping exporters and as a consequence the country's economic problems were beginning to ease.

He judged that it would take five or six years before the effects of the last leading bubble were fully exorcised from the Japanese economy.

Mr Bergsten argued that a currency pact should be introduced in two stages. There should be a first stage to cope with present stresses being caused by the weakness of the yen and the approach of European Monetary Union.

He believed that European countries were pursuing devaluation of their currencies as a deliberate act so as to gain competitive advantage ahead of being absorbed into European Monetary Union.

Once European Monetary Union is created, however, Mr Bergsten expected it to become a very strong currency — "the

world's second currency after the dollar" — creating the need for a further currency pact between the US, Europe and Japan.

"Without target zones for these currencies, you can expect some pretty fierce trade disputes between the three blocks," he said.

"I don't hold with the view that the euro will be a weak currency... on the contrary, because nations within it will have so much fiscal freedom, the central bank will be forced to adjust for this with a tight monetary policy. High interest rates will mean a strong euro."

EMU 'crisis over the euro'

Yvetta Cooper

The "unpopular euro" has become the focus for "a crisis of confidence in European integration", according to a Bundesbank board member. Speaking at a conference on monetary union in Otzenhausen, Germany yesterday, Bundesbank official Peter Schmidt launched a strong attack on critics of German monetary policy and institutions, in particular the French.

Mr Schmidt criticised French proposals to set up a political counterweight to the European Central Bank. He said such arrangements were not provided for within the Maastricht Treaty, and complained that "the question has to be asked as to how seriously our partners are taking the ECB's independence."

Meanwhile the German Finance Ministry refused to comment on the hint made by another Bundesbank member that the Germans would veto the appointment of someone from France to head the new ECB. Helmut Hesse, said on Thursday night that it was "absolutely impossible" that the first head of the new ECB would be French because each member of economic and monetary union will have a veto over the election.

Tensions between the French and German approach to monetary union have been evident for some time. However, the pressures for the two countries to resolve their differences and stick to the existing timetable for monetary union remain extremely strong.

According to a third member of the Bundesbank, speaking yesterday in Moscow, delaying monetary union would be bad for the German economy. Mr Welteke said: "We must assume that it would lead to a revaluation of the mark and that would have a negative influence on the export capabilities of the German economy at a time when unemployment is already high."

A key to unlocking value in utilities

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Yesterday's news of more ingenious payouts to shareholders in a utility group is further evidence of the sector's emergence from the cloud it has been under for the past three years. This rather amorphous grouping has been hit by a succession of unexpectedly severe regulatory reviews, but it has been the growing certainty with which the market has been factoring in the election of a Labour government that has cast the longest shadow. The water and electricity industries have borne the brunt of these fears, being seen as the most likely target for Labour's "windfall" tax, variously put at anything from £3bn to £10bn.

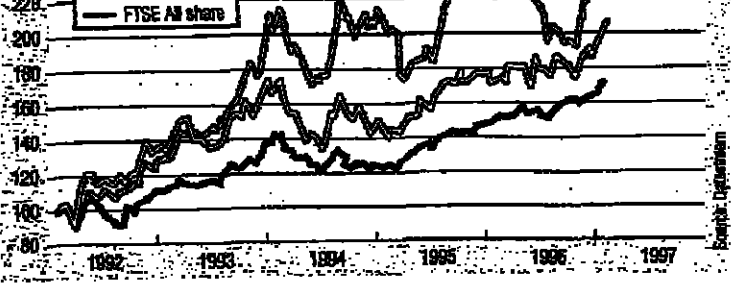
But, as our chart shows, there has been a definite re-rating of the sector since the latter end of last year. There is a feeling abroad that the gloom has been overdone.

One factor is the robust financial strength of the companies, now being unlocked in buy-backs and the like. The first inkling of this came in Northern Electric's "scored early" defence against Trafalgar House in 1995, which promised a 500p-a-share payout to shareholders but would have seen gearing soar to 225 per cent. Although the Trafalgar bid failed, that such audacious financial engineering could be

seriously contemplated lifted the lid on the sector. Even after suffering a second regulatory review in 12 months, UK electricity companies still looked successful morsels to electricity groups from the US, where regulation leaves fewer crumbs for shareholders and gearing of 100 per cent is not uncommon. In the 18 months since the regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, com-

pleted his second review in July 1995, eight of the regional electricity companies have been taken over by US groups and the remaining utilities are busy gearing up to show how much they can give back to shareholders.

Yesterday's Southern Electric payout comes hot on the heels of a similar deal announced by Yorkshire Water. Both were dreamed up by Max Ziff of the



merchant bankers SBC Warburg to get round the clamp put on buy-backs and special dividends by the Chancellor last year.

Although the payback is complicated in the detail, the rationale is simple and far once not skewed in favour of big City institutions. The beauty of Southern's scheme is that the B shares it proposes to issue put an instrument paying around 6 per cent gross — a rate comparable with most building societies — into the hands of shareholders, while giving them the chance to realise capital by selling back to the company. No one class of shareholder benefits over another and all can still benefit from a progressive dividend policy on their remaining ordinary shares. Southern is projecting payments to shareholders rising between 5 and 8 per cent in real terms until the year 2000.

Other utilities have already won permission from shareholders for buy-backs. The advent of the new scheme from Warburg will only increase the chances of some form of further payback to shareholders, while gearing of 30 to 35 per cent at Yorkshire Water and Southern even after the latest deals means they could conceivably have a second bite of the cherry.

All this begs the big question of what

Labour might do. Earlier this week, Scottish Amicable released a blood-chilling analysis of why utilities are going to prove poor investments for the rest of this century. Part of its argument is that Labour, facing a big government borrowing requirement, will find it hard to resist turning the windfall tax into a permanent annual levy. At the same time, it highlights the potential for a significant tightening of the regulatory screw under Labour.

But both the City and the utility industry generally is coming round to the view that these threats are increasingly quantifiable and containable. Nigel Hawkins at Yamaichi points out that a windfall tax of £3bn on water and electricity alone would represent less than 9 per cent of the combined sector's market capitalisation. At the same time, observers suggest Labour may find the National Health Service and the education system may assume a higher priority than utilities regulation.

With the strength of the pound hammering profits at many other UK industrial companies, the domestic earnings and solid balance sheets of the utilities are looking increasingly attractive. Mr Hawkins singles out PowerGen, Wessex Water and Southern Electric on these grounds.

IN BRIEF

• British Telecom has told Ofel, the telephone watchdog, that plans for new price controls for the wholesale charges levied on competitor companies for using its network are too tough and could compromise competition. Ofel is currently considering rates for BT's network charges, but has yet to reveal the precise level of any price cuts. BT has also released a survey commissioned from the consultancy group Ovum, which suggests its current network charges are some of the lowest in the world.

• The electricity watchdog, Ofel, published its latest consultative document on rules for rival suppliers when the domestic market is opened to competition in 1998. The documents go some way to toughening consumer protection, with new conditions to curb abuse of power by dominant suppliers.

• French unemployment fell by 29,000, in December to 3,092,500, after seasonal factors were taken into account. But analysts fear the overall trend in unemployment is still upwards from the current 12.7 per cent. Further falls in interest rates, after Thursday's 0.5 percentage point cut, are expected.

• The first bonds officially denominated in euros were issued yesterday by the European Investment Bank. Payments will be in euros until the single currency is created, at the rate of one ecu for one euro. A spokesman for Banque Paribas, one of the lead managers for the bond issue, said it was "a vote of confidence that monetary union would go ahead".

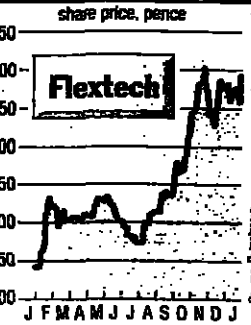
• Volkswagen has suspended a manager in its purchasing department in connection with bribery allegations. VW would not reveal the name of the manager but said he had been suspended to avoid possible destruction of evidence. Der Spiegel magazine said last week that managers in VW's purchasing department asked the German division of ABB Asea Brown Boveri for a DM10m (£3.8m) bribe for giving ABB a DM400m contract to build a paintshop at VW's Czech subsidiary.

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100	4275.0	+47.4
FTSE 250	4595.3	+22.8
FTSE 350	2115.5	+20.8
SEAQ VOLUME	849.4m shares,	
	44,317 bargains	
Gifts Index	94.61	+0.24

Share spotlight



Rumours surround Reuters as Footsie romps ahead

Taking Stock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year



Rumours of a big wire service merger were almost submerged in the excitement over the digital television alliance. Stories surfacing in New York suggested Reuters, the financial information group, was seeking a deal with the US information provider Dow Jones, creator of the famous New York share index.

According to a report in *Business Week*, the London-based group has put out feelers to leading Dow Jones shareholders. Reuters, it said, had expressed an interest in merging with Dow Jones, which publishes the *Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's* magazine. It was also prepared to mount an outright takeover bid although reluctant to make a hostile move.

A US fund manager, Michael Price, who runs Franklin Resources Mutual Share Fund, has built a 5 per cent Dow Jones stake and says: "The risk-

reward ratio is very good." He is determined to push the management into boosting the shares, which have failed to sparkle. Mr Price is reputed to have been a significant force in creating the pressure which encouraged the big Chase Manhattan-Chemical Bank merger. Like Reuters the US group's profit prospects have dimmed in the face of much more intense competition and the vast capital outlay needed just to jog along in such a fast moving business. It is said some Dow Jones shareholders have grown disenchanted and would be receptive to Reuters' overtures. As shares have soared Reuters has retreated. The price, 806p in the autumn, fell 11.5p to 650p.

Most equities romped ahead, aided and abetted by the television spectacular. The dramatic TV alliance provided the extra spur for a market already inspired by a

high flying New York and a weakening pound. Carlton Communications, reflecting its TV link with Granada and BSkyB, led the blue chip charge, up 39p to 558.5p. BSkyB, expected to report a 40 per cent interim profit advance to £150m next week, gained 18.5p to 599p and Granada 19.5p to 897.5p. Flextech, involved in the digital venture with the BBC, put on 39p to 699p.

But with the prospect of more competition the cable companies missed out. Cable and Wireless, leading the cable grouping, fell 13p to 466p and Nynex lost 14.5p to 99.5p. Others lower included General Ca-

ble, 13p to 176p, and Telewest Communications, 11p to 117p. Footsie closed at a peak, up 47.4 points to 4,275.3, topping the previous high, hit last week, by 4.3.

The supporting FTSE 250 failed to match its earlier high, although gaining 22.8 to 4,595.4. Gifts managed gains of almost a point. EMI, the showbiz group, had another flat session, falling 40.5p to 1,211p on worries about its US involvement. An industry study indicated sales are slowing down. Supermarkets were in the investor check-out with Safeway off 8p to 383p. Bass, where rumours of a bid for Accor, the French hotel

group, circulate, fell 5.5p to 846.5p with Barclays de Zoete Wedd said to be negative.

Among takeover stocks to the fore were Schroders, up 61.5p to 1,714p, and Zeneca, 53.5p to 1,804.5p.

General Accident, despite stories that it could be bought by the Abbey National-Scottish Amicable affair, rose 24p to 806p. In a strong banking sector Abbey improved 15.5p to 784.5p.

Oil remained in form with British Petroleum Petroleum Syndicate ending 46p higher at 1,365 and Monument Oil & Gas, following a NatWest Securities buy signal, gaining 1.75p to 90p. Enterprise Oil made further headway, up 7.5p to 686.5p.

Stagecoach, the buses and trains group, rose 12p to 752.5p as the tender offer by former Potterbrook shareholders led to 28.8 million shares (12.1 per cent) being sold at 730p. The

vendors, cashing on the sale of their Potterbrook leasing business, had planned to sell 35 million shares.

Southern Electric, producing a cash windfall through a capital restructuring, firmed 13p to 800.5p.

SR Gent, the clothing struggler, failed to produce takeover developments, easing 2p to 57.5p. It said approaches were "being considered".

Surrey Free Inns shed 11p to 486p as Whitbread confirmed it had sold shares. It is thought to have unloaded all its 4.5 per cent stake. The Paramount puts chain held at 43.5p as Nomura increased its stake to 9.7 per cent.

Biocompatibles International had another ebullient run, up 21.5p to 1,155p. Merrill Lynch is looking for 1,600p.

Housebuilders were strong. Berkeley, up 38.5p to 735p, raised £34m by placing 5 per cent of its capital at 715p.

Omnicare, specialising in home healthcare, rose 10p to 127.5p as a 15.8 per cent stake changed hands. Apris Healthcare, a US group where Timothy Aitken was president until 15 months ago, sold on to a major shareholder of Transworld Home Healthcare, a Nasdaq company. Mr Aitken, chairman of Omnicare, has become chairman and chief executive of Transworld. He says Transworld will be able to provide significant resources to Omnicare.

Arcon International, formerly Conroy, rose 5.5p to 44p, a 12 month high, as hopes grew about developments at its Galmoy lead and zinc mine.

There has been active trading in Burtonwood Brewery this week with vague stories of stake building. The shares are 181.5p.

Share Price Data

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The Independent Index

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FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Starting Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
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Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4378 (9.00am - 5.00pm).

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
British Gas	320,000	Carlini Doms	200,000	Sainsbury	84,000
ASDA Group	290,000	Cable & Wire	190,000	Sainsbury	70,000
British Steel	140,000	National Grid	100,000	Firstgroup	70,000
BSkyB	120,000	BT	90,000	BT	70,000
Harman	120,000	Heineken	80,000	Deere	70,000

FTSE 100 index by hour

Open	4225.6 up 24.2	11.00	4244.3 up 18.9	15.00	4272.0 up 42.6
09.00	4248.9 up 20.5	12.00	4258.5 up 28.1	16.00	4287.0 up 40.8
10.00	4250.0 up 21.6	13.00	4254.6 up 38.2	Close	4275.3 up 47.4

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Foreign Exchange Rates

OTHER SPOT RATES \$/GAL. 2017			
Country	Starting	Country	Starting
Algeria	18547	Qatar	125535
Brazil	182523	Oman	18317
Canada	18508	Pakistan	40709
France	18597	Philippines	42871
Germany	185358	Portugal	26380
Egypt	18498	Romania	49280
India	187917	Saudi Arabia	34778
Indonesia	279726	Russia	910156
Iran	185495	South Africa	7388
Italy	185363	Taiwan	443542
Japan	18580	Thailand	36320
Kuwait	18580	UAE	18480

*All figures represent loaded ship to flow and are quoted (London) from spot rates, from quoted low to high and are a preliminary report based on news. *Dollar rates quoted are approximate. For more details on other rates, see page 10.

Tourist Rates .

E Baya		E Baya		E Baya	
Australia/Dollars	3,0480	France/Francs	8,7790	New Zealand/Dollars	2,2690
Austria/Schillings	13,5200	Germany/Marks	2,9500	Norway/Livres	10,3375
Belgium/Francs	50,4300	Greece/Drachmas	400,0000	Portugal/Escudos	263,4000
Canada/Dollars	2,1375	Hong Kong/Dollars	12,2830	Spain/Pesetas	17,7900
Cyprus/Pounds	0,7750	India/Rupees	0,0855	Switzerland/Francs	2,7200
Denmark/Krone	9,8500	Italy/Lira	257,0000	Taiwan/New Taiwan Dollars	37,2500
Holland/Guilder	2,9940	Japan/Yen	105,0000	United States/Dollars	1,000000
Finland/Marks	7,8600	Malta/Lira	15,0700	United States/Dollars	1,0000

Interest Rates

UK	500%	Germany	250%	US	875%	Japan	050%
Spain		Discount		Prime		Discount	
France	315%	Lombard	455%	Discount		Boligum	
Intervention		Canada		Red Funds	525%	Discount	250%
Italy		Prime	475%	Spain		Central	300%
Discount	75%	Discount		10-Day Repo	600%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Danmark		Surebids		Discount	100%
Advances	250%	Discount	325%	Repo (Ase)	49%	Lombard	425%

Bond Yields — 21

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	7%	74%	11%	76%	Netherlands	6.75%	45%	6%	58%
US	5%	63%	6.5%	68%	Spain	6.4%	57%	8.8%	57%
Canada	5.5%	14%	3%	25%	Italy	6.3%	63%	8.4%	73%
Australia	9.7%	74%	10%	74%	Belgium	5.5%	44%	7.0%	55%
Germany	8.0%	47%	6.25%	57%	Sweden	10%	55%	6.5%	68%
France	5.5%	44%	6.5%	56%	ECU/DM	6%	48%	7%	62.5%

Source: CSC Markets Research
 Yields calculated on local basis ** Denotes new benchmarks

Money Market Rates

	1 Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5 1/2	5	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
Sterling CDs	5 1/2	5	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
Local Authority Depos	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
Discount Market Depos	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
Treasury Bills (Buy)	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
Dollar CDs	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2
ECU Interest Den	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2

Liffe Financial Futures ..

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Edwards traded	Open interest
Long Gold (Mar 97)	70.58	70.15-70.04	6387	23338
Longman City Bond (Mar 97)	100.47	100.41-100.41	1731	11632
3 Mth Eurodollar (Mar 97)	93.47	93.29-93.29	1507	10159
3 Mth Sterling (Mar 97)	93.65	93.65-93.62	7834	9640
3 Mth Eurodollar (Mar 97)	93.36	93.30-93.36	3204	9281
3 Mth Eurodollar (Mar 97)	93.22	93.19-93.22	1429	8954
3 Mth Eurodollar (Mar 97)	93.64	93.75-93.59	2737	n/a
3 Mth Eurodollar (Mar 97)	93.62	93.94-93.20	3624	6871
3 Mth ECU (Mar 97)	93.20	93.20-93.20	490	2248
FTSE 100 (Mar 97)	4914	4905-4905	563	338
FTSE 250 (Mar 97)	4810	4810-4810	7938	576
FTSE 100 (Mar 97)	4814	4820-4820	0	0

Liffe FTSE Index Option

Settlement price: 4229	closing offer price				Call/Put
Series	4150	4200	4250	4300	Total/vols
Feb	110/28	75/42	46/84	24/97	--
Mar	133/59	99/77	70/100	48/127	--
Apr	152/82	21/100	94/123	70/149	--
May	177/84	142/110	112/130	88/154	--

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange					
Shores	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg
Aluminium HE	1945-65	1930-10	5988	155725	+ 30
Aluminium Alloy	1520-65		3738	72340	+ 250
Copper A	2345-50	2340-50	16700	165550	+ 2775
Lead	696-7	696-7	5785	107725	+ 65
Nickel	760-7200	7280-7200	16300	4682	+ 720
Tin	5700-10	5705-75	374	9480	+ 230
Zinc	101-3	102-30	16325	146475	+ 630
Settlement Commission	18	\$300	\$4		
	100	\$100	\$100		
Stock volumes & change in stock volume					

PRECIOUS METALS as of 30-01-97
per fix for \$ £ Coins

Platanum	352.75	216.00	Britannia	3/3	230	Krugfranks	352.361	216.223
Palmdura	121.50	75.00	Britannia.5 oz	191	118	Sows	61.91	50.56
Pink spot	489.00	303.75	Britannia.25 oz	98	58	Notles	352.368	217.227
Gold Bull	349.25	215.72	Britannia.10 oz	49	30	Maple Leaf	358.373	220.190

Source: Sinks & Son

AGRICULTURAL as at 31.01.67
Cocon Cotton

LFPE	Stone	LFPE	Stone	LFPE	Stone	LFPE	Stone	AD	Stone
Mar	660	Jan	1537	Jan	9330	Mar	5200		
May	921	Mar	1532	Mar	9380	Apr	5450	Feb	2230
Jul	96	May	1532	May	9100	May	6000	Apr	1140
Vol	4624	Vol	7054	Vol	79	Vol	47	Vol	140

White Sugar	Stone	Freight	Wheat	Corn	1200 Price
LFPE	Stone	LFPE	Stone	CBOT #	Contractual
Mar	28610	Jan	1073	Jan	9370
May	2950	Feb	1070	Mar	9600
Aug	29620	Vol	380	May	9600

HF	Stone	HF	Stone	HF	Stone	HF	Stone
Mar	28610	Jan	1073	Jan	9370	Mar	5200
May	2950	Feb	1070	Mar	9600	Apr	5450
Aug	29620	Vol	380	May	9600	May	6000

Other Softs (Agricultural)	as at 30/9/97
1000	Malays (in 3**
	\$30000

[illegible]

May	2195	+013	Apr	2182
Vol	2069	Index	22.62	Vol

Commodity Indexes		% Chg	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg
	Index	12/10	11/10	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10
India	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	-2.89	160.83	+7.84
Agricultural	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	+1.77	294.78	+8.23
Industrial	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	-4.33	160.83	+7.84
Energy	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	-4.33	160.83	+7.84
Metals	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	-4.33	160.83	+7.84
Services	9770=100	226.50	+0.95	276.26	-4.33	160.83	+7.84

100 Largest Insurance Firms

[illegible]

1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 26

Hill to be overshadowed by Summit

Racing

GREG WOOD

For at least six weeks, ever since the Siberian winds arrived to disrupt every training programme from Cornwall to Middleham, the front end of betting on the Cheltenham Gold Cup has been boringly familiar. Take a last look at it this morning, however, since the next two days could leave many bookmakers with writer's cramp, as prices are revised and then scribbled out with each turn of events.

Four of the first six names in William Hill's Gold Cup list, Imperial Call, Cooze Hill, Doran's Pride and The Grey Monk, will face the starter over the weekend. The good news for British punters is that most will be available on-screen scrutiny now that tomorrow's Hennessey Gold Cup at Leopardstown is to be squeezed into BBC2's coverage of snooker and bowls.

Today, though, Cooze Hill, Walter Dennis's winner of the other Hennessey at Newbury in November, attempts to give the front end of betting on the Cheltenham Gold Cup a new twist. Cooze Hill's position in the Festival betting, second-favourite at around 6-1 and two points shorter than One Man, is something of an affront to strict form students. They point out that his victory at Newbury came from a handicap mark of just 136.

It is another measure of how far he needs to go to reach the top flight that, had Unguided Missile, a 25-1 chance for the Gold Cup, taken his chance today, he would have been asked to give Cooze Hill all of 10lb. At Dennis's yard, too, there is some puzzlement over the runner's elevation in the betting markets. "We're all baffled, really," says Dennis.

January 1997 was the driest for 200 years — has forced the stable hand. "We'd be happier if there was a bit of cut in the ground," Dennis said, "but he's got to have a run before the Gold Cup and I can't foresee any rain for some time, if at all. It's pretty desperate stuff."

If Cooze Hill truly deserves to be second-favourite for the Gold Cup, and not merely a talented and interesting 16-1 chance, he surely must win today. It may be instructive, though, that Dennis feels that "hopefully, after this weekend the pressure might be off us a little bit." This is a tough sign for Cooze Hill, and any value surely lies elsewhere.

Major Summit (next best 1.50), who gets 13lb from the top weight, makes far more appeal, particularly given his liking for Sandown and the recent emergence of Josh Gifford's string from a lean spell. A horse who narrowly beat Major Summit earlier this year, Aardwolf (12.4.5), should emphasise his chance in the opening race, while Ground Nut (1.20) looks the best option in a very disappointing Agfa Hurdle.

The handicap hurdle is much more inviting, and Charlie Mann's TARRS BRIDGE (nap 2.25) is the one to back. Binkers improved him considerably at Cheltenham last time, he goes well fresh and prefers a sound surface, all of which makes him an outstanding bet at the 10-1. The early offer of 11-1 for Cooze Hill, which holds little interest, is the only runner to make any appeal.

Richard Edmondson: Richard Edmondson (nap 3.15) is the one to back. Binkers improved him considerably at Cheltenham last time, he goes well fresh and prefers a sound surface, all of which makes him an outstanding bet at the 10-1. The early offer of 11-1 for Cooze Hill, which holds little interest, is the only runner to make any appeal.

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Agfa Limited Handicap Chase - Sandown 1.50				
Horse (Owner/Trainer)	Weight	Age	Form	Notes
Major Summit (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
One Man (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Ground Nut (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2

Sandown Handicap Hurdle - Sandown 2.25				
Horse (Owner/Trainer)	Weight	Age	Form	Notes
Major Summit (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
One Man (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Ground Nut (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2

12.45: SIMPLY DASHING, who scored another bloodless victory when coasting home 10 lengths clear of Ballymore 2m 4f at Hurdle, is a smart chaser in the making. Aardwolf, 1/4 lengths third to Diddled in the Grade One Feltham 'Lovers' Chase at Kempton, drops in class and looks the danger.

1.50: MAJOR SUMMIT, a short-head second to Aardwolf here last time, is well handicapped. Hennessey winner Cooze Hill has gone up the weights and Aardwolf, a length third to Diddled in the Grade One Feltham 'Lovers' Chase at Kempton, drops in class and looks the danger.

2.25: ERZADIAN, 9 lengths clear of the third when a head second to Nick The Bear 2m 7f at Wetherby, is a smart chaser in the making. Aardwolf, 1/4 lengths third to Diddled in the Grade One Feltham 'Lovers' Chase at Kempton, drops in class and looks the danger.

2.15: There is hardly a runner in this field that would not prefer the going here characteristically soft. FULL OF OATS may be less impressive than the most, while Dalkys Boy will look a long way off a single run following an absence.

Pipe dream vanishes

Martin Pipe's attempt to go through Taunton's seven-race card yesterday fell at the first hurdle. The champion trainer, who sponsored the card, still has a 363-1 shot of winning through Indian Jockey, D'Niam, Banneton Bill and Maid Equal.

Pipe added three equal dates for the opening novices' hurdle, with Break The Rules faring best in finishing second. "I'm not deflated," Pipe said. "It was an im-

CHEPSTOW

1.15 Dever Bay, 2.50 Little Hooligan, 3.40 Korbell, 3.55 White Willow. GOING: Good. Left-hand, undulating course with runs of 2 1/2 miles. Club 111; Tattersall 110 (C&S); C&S PARK: Free.

1.20: CHIEF'S SONG, not entirely disgraced in finishing 12 1/2 lengths fifth to Make A Stand in the Lantzote Handicap Hurdle at Kempton, has less to do here. Double Symphonia may pose most problems.

1.50: MAJOR SUMMIT, a short-head second to Aardwolf here last time, is well handicapped. Hennessey winner Cooze Hill has gone up the weights and Aardwolf, a length third to Diddled in the Grade One Feltham 'Lovers' Chase at Kempton, drops in class and looks the danger.

2.25: ERZADIAN, 9 lengths clear of the third when a head second to Nick The Bear 2m 7f at Wetherby, is a smart chaser in the making. Aardwolf, 1/4 lengths third to Diddled in the Grade One Feltham 'Lovers' Chase at Kempton, drops in class and looks the danger.

2.15: There is hardly a runner in this field that would not prefer the going here characteristically soft. FULL OF OATS may be less impressive than the most, while Dalkys Boy will look a long way off a single run following an absence.

Pipe added three equal dates for the opening novices' hurdle, with Break The Rules faring best in finishing second. "I'm not deflated," Pipe said. "It was an im-

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SANDOWN HANDICAP HURDLE - 10-YEAR-OLD				
Horse (Owner/Trainer)	Weight	Age	Form	Notes
Major Summit (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
One Man (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Ground Nut (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
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LEOPARDSTOWN Sunday				
Horse (Owner/Trainer)	Weight	Age	Form	Notes
Major Summit (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
One Man (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Ground Nut (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
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Waterloo (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Agfa Hurdle (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2

HENNESSY COGNAC GOLD CUP CHASE (3m)				
Horse (Owner/Trainer)	Weight	Age	Form	Notes
Major Summit (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
One Man (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
Ground Nut (M. Dennis/12.4.5)	12.4	5	1-2	1-2
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GUIDE

He, he acts on fast ground and has twice won the race after the finish when he was twice outpied by the Pope horse in Space Truckers' race at Double's Symposium leading to winning formance. There is not bad for a useful novice chestnut the Punchestown Festival but for clouting the brilliant — 5th to Aranea in The Ladbroke and 1st to the 1st in

sport

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP

Scotland have dipped into Gloucester's reserves for the open-side flanker they hope will help to stifle the game of England's recalled No 10 in the Calcutta Cup at Twickenham today. **Chris Hewett** spoke to them

Return of the natives with attitude

Smith to deliver message

Rob Wainwright regards him as his closest ally, the man he automatically turns to when "we're in the last 20 minutes of a game, something needs to be said and I'm too knackered to open my mouth". Much to the relief of Scotland's captain, it is at moments of crisis that Ian Smith stands up to be counted.

Which is pretty ironic when you come to consider it. Smith's rich experience of life among the mud and bullets of top-flight Courage League rugby may be good enough for an international side who reached the quarter-finals of the World Cup less than two years ago and very nearly marched off with a Grand Slam last season, but is transparently not good enough for Gloucester. Unsung, unsophisticated and downright unsuccessful as they may be, the Cherry and Whites would sooner pick dead leaves from the gutter than pick their former skipper.

"Don't ask me what's going on, ask Richard Hill," Smith said this week. In fact, he will be doing the asking himself as soon as he gets back to Kingsholm on Monday and Hill, the former Bath and England scrum-half who is in charge of playing matters in what remains one of the most passionate rugby hotbeds in Britain, can expect a few cards to appear on the table.

It has been an awkward, not to say dispiriting, season for Smith, a 31-year-old civil engineer who earned his sporting spurs in the ruggedly hard school of the Gloucester Combination: Longevity, dedicated advocates of the "ask no questions, take no prisoners" philosophy, were his junior club and there are plenty of regulars in the Longford Road clubhouse who have taken almost personal offence at the marginalisation of their illustrious old boy.

"I played four or five league and Anglo-Welsh Cup matches back in September and then... well, nothing. I just couldn't get a run in the first team. When I did get another chance in the Pilkington Cup tie with Leeds in December, I dislocated my thumb just at the point where it connects with the wrist. I stayed on, of course - I'd waited long enough to play so I wanted to make the most of it - but it kept me out of Scotland's game with Wales a fortnight back."

A good one to miss, as it turned out. Smith, who qualifies for the Scots through his paternal grandparents, was restored to the side at the first available opportunity as the national selectors, predictably, reacted fiercely to a Murrayfield performance of depressing ineptitude, riddled as it was with more unforced errors than a Sunday morning mixed doubles in the local park.

"We've got to perform at Twickenham, because two straight defeats in a four-match championship means curtains. We know what people say about our forward strength - that England will take us to the cleaners again this year, just as they did on Grand Slam day last March - but as far as I'm concerned we've all been picked for this game on the basis that we are good enough to play at international level. Our job is to go out there and show some confidence in our own ability."



Ian Smith: 'I feel very focused for this one'

Photograph: Peter Jay

"It will be a hard game, of course - they're all hard these days - but I'm just hoping that all the rest I've had this year, frustrating though it may have been, will stand me in good stead. It's a double-edged sword, not playing for weeks on end: on the one hand you're bitterly upset at not being out there; on the other your appetite is getting sharper with each passing week. "I feel very focused for this one. I don't go in for all that anti-English stuff - Cullen and the blue shirt and the rest of it. What I do rate is some cool, calm analysis of what has to be done as a prelude to going out and doing it. I haven't had much good fortune at Twickenham - two appearances, two stuffings - but I've never played there for Scotland and it would be nice to turn things around today."

Capped 20 times since his debut against England at Murrayfield in 1992, Smith's

know-how should be invaluable against the old country's debutant open-side, the "other" Richard Hill. "Yes, experience counts for a lot at the top end of the game, but Richard and I have faced each other on a couple of occasions now and I think we know what to expect from each other."

"He's come on a fair bit since I first ran up against him. He's a big lad and he used to be something of a brawler, but he started to bring a lot more variety to his game over the last year or so. It should be interesting."

Hill speaks of Smith with equal respect. "I expect Ian to be very hard work, especially when the ball is on the ground. I'd rather not be drawn into that sort of battle but I'm aware that the time will come when I'll have to compete with him at the centre of the battle. He's got a lot of big games behind him and I couldn't really ask for a sterner test."

Grayson given a new script

Imagine, if you can, an A30 road protester riding roughshod over the English countryside at the wheel of a JCB. Now try to picture Paul Grayson, the England outside-half, putting Scotland to the sword with a sidestepping, try-scoring display of mesmerising attacking bravado. According to Grayson's detractors - and there are many - the former scenario is by far the more likely.

Grayson has more critics than O. J. Simpson has defence lawyers. Heaven knows, he is not the first kicking outside-half to wear his country's No 10 shirt - two years ago, Rob Andrew right-booted the Scots into an early grave without a murmur of dissent from the Twickenham faithful - but for whatever reason, the mood in the stands has changed from a particularly smug glorification of the pragmatic to a vociferous impatience with no-frills, no-thrills rugby - even if it turns out to be winning rugby.

The received wisdom is that Grayson is a one-dimensional points machine whose ability to kick like a donkey is compromised by the suspicion that he would struggle to run past the same animal on Weymouth sands. Today, on his return to the England side, he comes eyeball to eyeball with his Northampton club colleague Gregor Townsend, who just happens to be the most inventive and least orthodox stand-off in Britain. Sod's law strikes again.

"I play alongside Gregor week in, week out and I can honestly say that I haven't a clue what he will do out there this afternoon," the 25-year-old Lancastrian admits with a wry smile. Which, of course, adds fuel to the fires of scepticism. You wouldn't catch Gregor saying that about Paul, would you?

But Grayson, who kicked his country to the 1996 Five Nations title before being dumped in favour of Mike Carr for the early matches of the current campaign, is quite obviously a more rounded playmaker than he is given credit for. Ian McGeechan, the Northampton coach, believes last season was a prime example of England restricting the player rather than the other way round.

"I'd like to think England will give Paul the platform to express his complete range of skills," said the Scot, showing commendable even-handedness in advance of a Calcutta Cup match that could easily consign his own countrymen to Five Nations oblivion. And as if on cue, Grayson believes the pendulum has swung in his favour.

"I've got a new brief," he said yesterday. "After last year, I suppose people were justified in suggesting I had only one string to my bow. But you have to take account of the circumstances: we went to Murrayfield to play a Scottish side who were 80 minutes from a Grand Slam, our own season was on the line, Dean Richards was back and we decided to play a constricted but very effective game."

"I'd like to think we're in a position to introduce more variety this time. That is not to say I intend to throw every ball out wide and spend all afternoon running after Jon Sleightholme and Tony Underwood, but I do intend to jumble things up within the broad framework of our agreed approach. And yes, you do need a framework. There is absolutely no point in going on to the pitch



Paul Grayson: 'I do intend to jumble things up'

Photograph: David Ashdown

without a clear idea of what you're trying to achieve; to do so would be to leave yourself open to confusion and any harassment stuff would benefit the Scots, not us."

A hard nut, Grayson. A former semi-professional footballer with Accrington Stanley, there is more than a touch of the truly mad, deeply about his competitive spirit. He possesses the priceless capacity to slam the mental door on life's little irrelevances - a hostile home crowd, for instance - and concentrate on impressing the right people. "I want to do the right things in the eyes of the selectors," he says with quiet self-assurance. "I'm not too worried about anyone else."

"As for handling the pressure, I think this championship will be very different from last season's. It was so new to me a year ago, all the hype and media attention. This time, I know what's what. It should be far easier to focus entirely on what I'm here to do."

Not that he made such a bad fist of things last time out. Forty-four points from an England total of 69 tells its own story; almost faultless against the French in Paris, he made every bit as important a contribution as Richards to the Murrayfield victory without receiving a zillionth of the praise, and he rounded things off with 23 points against the Irish as his team sneaked the championship spoils on the back of a French defeat in Cardiff.

Will a repeat performance be good enough this time? Unfair as it may sound, probably not; England cannot hope to score three tries in four matches and escape with their collective reputation or their current hierarchy intact. But if Paul Grayson is still in place when the Red Rose takes on the Red Dragon in Cardiff next month, half a dozen penalties and a snappy drop goal will do very nicely, thank you. There is not an Englishman alive who would quibble with that.

Greenwood shines as leader

CHRIS HEWETT

England A 52
Scotland A 17

Will Greenwood's one-man campaign to make life almost unbearably awkward for Jack Rowell and the rest of the England hierarchy reached new heights yesterday as the national second-string put eight tries past Scotland A, who had themselves done something very similar to Wales only a fortnight ago.

The Leicester centre captained the A team for the first time at the Stoop Memorial Ground and, judging by the absolute pearl of a performance he produced yesterday, he was born to lead. The next time he plays a representative game in West London, it may well be across the road at Twickenham.

Before that can happen,

however, Rowell has either to rewrite the laws of arithmetic by fitting four centres into two positions, or instigate a cull of his sacred-cow contingent. Jeremy Guscott, on the bench behind Phil de Glanville and Will Carling in today's Calcutta Cup match, is officially next in line, but Greenwood, seven years younger and as hungry as they come, is galloping up on the rails.

He started with a rush, blowing away an Eric Peters tackle 25 metres out and striding imperiously to the line without another hand being laid upon him. For the rest of the half he contented himself with some slide-rule passing, repeatedly ushering the fast and elusive Nick Beal into dangerous holes behind the first wave of Scottish defence.

With the game virtually won at the break - England went in 18-5 ahead - Greenwood moved up another notch and

made the Scots pay for some less than vintage tackling. He did not add to his personal tally, but his beautifully weighted pass in the build-up to Beal's try on 41 minutes and his imaginative backhand flip to send Tony Diprose over at the posts 17 minutes later were reward enough.

Beal turned in a display at full-back that suggested he might push Tim Stimpson all the way for a regular England place while Kyran Bracken looked back to his best at scrum-half and very nearly made a mockery of Rowell's decision to drop him from the bench for today's main event.

The Scots, outgunned up front, still managed three tries, two of them falling to the full-back, Derrick Lee. But their day ended even more badly than the score suggested with Andy Nicol being taken off on a stretcher with a serious elbow injury.

England A: Will Greenwood 2, Greenwood, Beal, Diprose, Adams, Sherry, Conner, Jones, King 3, Pennington, King 2, Scotland A: Tony Lee 2, Peters, Conner, Welsh, ENGLAND A: W Beal (Northampton); A Adams (Leeds), W Greenwood (Leicester), M Greenwood (Wales), D Lister (Harlequins), A King (Wales), K Bracken (Saracens), K Wales (Leeds), R Girdlestone (Leicester), J Mallett (Gloucester), G Archer (Newcastle), D Shaw (Gloucester), C Sherry (Worcester), A Diprose (Scarlets), M Beal (Leeds), R Pennington (Leicester), J Mallett (Gloucester) for Leeds; 48. SCOTLAND A: D Lee (Northampton); C Sherry (Worcester), P Rennie (Glasgow), P Rodge (Northampton), J Craig (West of Scotland), P Wright (Worcester), S Campbell (Melrose), S Grimes (Worcester), E Pugh (Glasgow), C Hoag (Melrose), C M Wallace (Glasgow), R Macpherson, G Lang (Hawick) for Glasgow; 50. 1 Penalty (Glasgow) for Scotland.

■ Faced with the threat of the proposed World Rugby Championship, the South African Rugby Football Union spent 57m rand (almost £8m) last year to keep its top players.

A financial statement issued yesterday showed Saru gave 33m rand to provincial unions and spent another 24m to put national players under contract.

Brittle asked to accept deal

Tony Hall, secretary of the Rugby Football Union, has asked the isolated executive committee chairman, Cliff Brittle, to accept the peace deal agreed between Twickenham and the senior clubs.

Brittle signalled his disapproval of the agreement immediately after the announcement on Thursday night that the RFU president, John Richardson, had finalised a deal with England's leading 24 clubs to end the long-running conflict.

"I am taking a few days to consider the implications," Brittle said. He must now decide whether to activate his threat to call a special general meeting of the RFU, the third in 14 months. Hall said: "I hope Cliff Brittle will reconsider his position as he has worked harder than anybody to drive a deal that keeps the governing body in the right place, and the clubs together as well."

There is the prospect of a

special general meeting when peace has broken out and this is something that the whole game can rejoice about. Cliff will be thinking about it but I hope he can get on with the game."

"He fought very hard to tighten the screw a little bit tighter. We felt the game could no longer take any difficulties and really had to move forward. I think Cliff is a man of integrity. He has seen something in this agreement that isn't perfect and he's a perfectionist."

The full committee of the RFU gave their backing to Richardson at the emergency meeting on Thursday and Charles Levison, a member of the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs' negotiating team, mentioned that resignation may be an option for Brittle. "He speaks with a minority voice and whether he should resign is his decision," Levison said.

However, Brittle believes he

has a mission to protect the game from the possibility of it being taken over by the millionaire owners of England's top clubs.

He will have enough support from far-flung parts of the country to prolong his campaign and will easily gather the necessary 100 signatures from the 2,000 English clubs to call an SGM in Birmingham similar to the gathering that elected him in January last year.

The England captain, Phil de Glanville, yesterday welcomed the end of the battle to control rugby union, but asked: "Why did it take so long?" De Glanville, leading England for the first time in the Five Nations, called for "full speed ahead." But he added: "We still have to look at the details of the deal because we have seen so many false dawns."

On the field, Paul Sampson, normally a winger for Wasps, showed his club and the England selectors that he has a bright fu-

ture with a superb display at outside-half as the England's Under-21 side beat Scotland 35-26 at The Stoop yesterday.

Sampson, invited to train with the England squad last season when still a schoolboy, ran the game along with Orrell's impressive full-back, Rob Hitchmough.

England scored six tries in a victory that was far closer than it should have been after Scotland came back strongly in the second half.

Sampson was at the centre of everything good about England, although they failed to capitalise on their forward domination in the first half by relying too heavily on him and Hitchmough for inspiration.

Wales Under-21 also began the weekend in winning fashion as they scored four tries in the last 14 minutes to secure a comprehensive 44-16 victory against their Irish counterparts at Bridgend.

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Football's £243m question
Glenn Moore on how to spend
all that money, page 30

sport

Christie's final frontier
The former Olympic champion is
back in the spotlight, page 29

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP: A cohesive Scottish unit wants to play on England's nerves

De Glanville feels burden of expectation

CHRIS HEWITT
Rugby Union Correspondent

The great and good of the Rugby Football Union may have delivered their long-awaited verdict on the peace deal with England's senior clubs, but the jury is still out on the national team itself. If Jack Rowell's new-look outfit goes belly-up against Scotland at Twickenham today, capital punishment will be the least the coach can expect to get away with.

For this side, controversial in the rejection of Jeremy Guscott and Ben Clarke, has little to do with round-table consensus and everything to do with Rowell in his role as Big White Chief. As Phil de Glanville admitted on Thursday, the captain's input on selection was consultative rather than decisive.

It is reasonable to assume that De Glanville, under considerable pressure for his own place in midfield, would feel more comfortable operating alongside Guscott, Mike Catt and Adebayo Adebayo, all of whom are clubmates at Bath. Familiarity counts for an awful lot, especially in the hurly-burly of a Calcutta Cup match, but the skipper does not have that luxury today.

Two crucial elements in England's plan to expand their game beyond the postage stamp limits of Murrayfield 1996 – Tim Stimpson, the full-back, and Richard Hill, the new open-side flanker – are unknown quantities at Test level. There can be

no hope of a telepathic understanding at this early juncture, and therein lies the rub: the Scots, lightweight up front and workaday out wide, have nonetheless developed an enviable intimacy in the crucial decision-making positions of back-row and half-back, and if they can pinch a decent share of possession, they will be dangerous opponents.

Rob Wainwright, their captain, was in bullish mood yesterday as he mulled over what he considered to be conflicting statements of intent from the rival camp. "I've read comments by both De Glanville and Paul Grayson, their outside-half, and they seem to be saying different things," he said after a brief training run at Bracknell. "Phil was insisting that winning was the only important thing, which suggests that England might play to their traditional forward strength."

"Paul, on the other hand, was talking in terms of striking a happy medium between the fast, open game we saw from England against Italy in November – when, incidentally, they were under very little pressure – and the sterile approach we saw at Murrayfield last year."

Given that the Scots, with Ian Smith and his namesake Tom, a loose-head prop in the mould of the 1990 Grand Slam captain David Sole, making his debut in the front row, are well-equipped to feed off the slightest hint of confusion, Wainwright looked more than happy at the prospect

of England failing to sing from the same hymn sheet.

If Tom Smith, a squat, powerful 25-year-old Walsollian, turns out to be a quarter as good as Sole – a state-of-the-art loose head if ever there was one – then Jason Leonard will be in for an interesting 80 minutes today. Not so much at the set-piece, which even the Scots describe as Smith's most obvious weakness, but in the loose; the visitors believe the new boy can make a major impact at ruck and maul, as well as in the tackle count.

By coincidence, the last Tom Smith to make his Scottish debut at Twickenham ended up scoring a winning try from the second row. That was in 1983, however, and the Scots, who have not won in London since, have barely managed to cross the English line either.

It is now eight years since John Jeffrey, the Great White Shark, took advantage of a succession of English cock-ups to score in front of the old North Stand, and Wainwright is realistic enough to know that chances will be at a premium this afternoon. "I expect England to tackle hard and operate their customary tight defence," he admitted.

But for all their own talk of working the wide open spaces, England have been equally barren on the try-scoring front. They have not breached the Scottish line since 1993, when Stuart Barnes ripped the visitors to shreds in midfield, and the three subsequent games had been mere benefit occasions for a trio of kickers – Jon Callard in 1994, Rob Andrew a year later and the much-criticised Grayson last season.

If Rowell ends up relying on Grayson's accuracy again today, the fell sound of knives being sharpened will be almost deafening. Scotland's dire performance against Wales a fortnight ago has done the English few favours, for it only served to increase the burden of expectancy in England.

While Wainwright yesterday wore the relaxed look of a man who knew full well that his side could not possibly play as badly again, Rowell and De Glanville had no such comfort zone in which to recline. It is likely to be very edgy indeed.

Return of the natives, page 28



Overlord: Jack Rowell (left), the England coach, oversees line-out drills during training at Twickenham yesterday on the eve of today's Calcutta Cup Photograph: David Ashdown

England pay for casual air

Cricket

MARK BALDWIN
reports from Wanganui

England are heading for their first defeat in New Zealand, after a lacklustre display against New Zealand A on the second day here yesterday.

The timing of this game has not helped England, with just one travel day in between the torture of the final afternoon of the Auckland Test and the start of this four-dayer. A sports pick for much of the first two days was also proved a disincentive.

So much for the excuses, the facts are that England are now 261 runs behind New Zealand's second team after being bowled out for a tour-low 107 and then bowling indifferently themselves as the Kiwi side reached 187 for 4 in their second innings.

The decision to play all five of the players who did not play at Auckland has given England a weakened side, with the presence of only four front-line batsmen putting them at a disadvantage on a lively pitch that finally settled down yesterday afternoon.

England's players seemed to lose some of their enthusiasm for the fray as if they were going through the motions before next week's Test and then the Christchurch Test which immediately follows it.

Tempers were even shortening towards the end of the day, especially when several appeals were turned down.

Their lack of interest seemed to increase the moment that Geoff Allott and Heath Davis emerged to bowl with as much, if not more, hostility than on the first evening and any hopes of a first-innings lead soon disappeared as the pair bowled explosively when England resumed on 30 for 3.

Both harbour ambitions of making the second Test in Wellington, and the variation offered by Allott's bustling left-armers might just swing

the vote his way.

Davis, meanwhile, is a far better bowler than he was when he toured England back in 1994 and took 1 for 93 in 21 overs.

The ball which claimed Nasser Hussain, a rapid lifter from just short of a length, was as close to being unplayable as makes no difference.

Hussain was fifth out, taken at third slip off the shoulder of the bat, and soon England were 57 for 7 with Croft edging Davis to third slip and Jack Russell fending off another nasty delivery to gully.

Davis had taken three wickets in 12 balls and when he rested his overall figures were an impressive 4 for 22 from 14 overs. His partner in destruction, the 25-year-old Allott, finished with 4 for 44 when he headed Ronnie

When New Zealand A resumed with a lead of 74 their opener Craig Spearman also did his Test debut, hitting an attractive 47 before Iran had taken a slip. Iran was the one England player to emerge from the day with credit, following his gutsy innings of 40 with a spell of medium pace which showed that he is still capable of fighting back from what has been a personally deflating tour.

John Embury, the England assistant coach, looked on the bright side of a disappointing day. "It's more important in these games for the players on the fringe of the Test team – like Chris Silverwood, Robert Croft and Ronnie Iran – to get the opportunities of cricket in case they are selected for the next Test," he said.

"It has not been ideal having to start this game after just one day off following the first Test but we agreed to this itinerary so we just have to get on with it."

Graveney back in running for England job, page 29

WANGANUI SCOREBOARD

Second day of four: New Zealand A won 107-100	
NEW ZEALAND A - 107 (100 overs)	NEW ZEALAND A - 100 (100 overs)
1 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	1 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
2 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	2 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
3 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	3 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
4 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	4 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
5 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	5 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
6 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	6 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
7 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	7 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
8 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	8 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
9 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	9 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95
10 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95	10 J. Hume 84, C. E. W. Silverwood 6-95

ENGLAND v SCOTLAND	
at Twickenham	
T Stimpson..... Newcastle	15 R Shepherd..... Melrose
J Stirling..... Bath	14 D Stark..... Melrose
W Carling..... Harlequins	13 A Stanger..... Harlequins
P de Glanville..... Bath, capt	12 R Eriksson..... London Scottish
T Underwood..... Newcastle	11 K Logan..... Stirling County
P Grayson..... Northampton	10 G Townsend..... Northampton
A Gomersall..... Wasps	9 B Redpath..... Melrose
G Rowntree..... Leicester	1 T Smith..... Watlingtonians
M Regan..... Bristol	2 G Ellis..... Currie
J Leonard..... Harlequins	3 M Stewart..... Northampton
M Johnson..... Leicester	4 G Weil..... Newcastle
S Shaw..... Bristol	5 A Reed..... Wasps
L Dallaglio..... Wasps	6 P Walton..... Northampton
T Rodbar..... Northampton	7 R Wainwright..... Watlingtonians, capt
R Hill..... Saracens	8 I Smith..... Gloucester



In Monday's 20-page sports section
Tony Underwood gives his verdict on England's performance in the Calcutta Cup

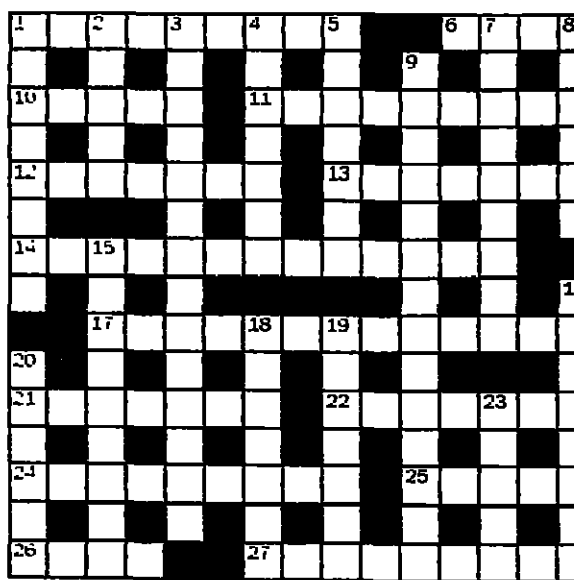
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3211, Saturday, 1 February

By Mass

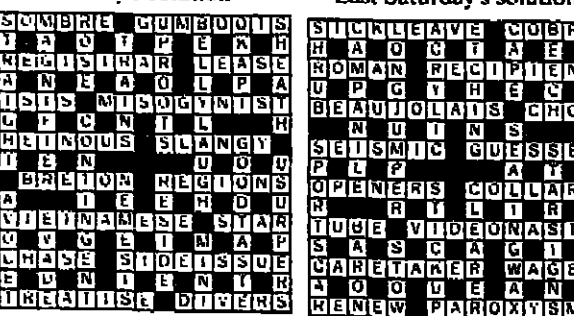
ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



- 1 Creature (like a scorpion?) is attacking (9)
- 2 One's out of the country for a time (4)
- 3 Female's spoken verse on highest deity (5)
- 4 Corresponds from the tropics? (9)
- 5 Sporting event requiring great nimble reserves (7)
- 6 It's rough following international crash (7)
- 7 Putting one's faith in a happy medium? (13)
- 8 This gale could be why torn trees bent round lake (5-8)
- 9 Head Ulster Unionist aboard coach (7)
- 10 Worst combine among worst (7)
- 11 The sort who readily comes to mind? (9)
- 12 Articulate characters? Not all! (5)
- 13 New blue edging, smooth ... (4)
- 14 ... woven satin in nap, proving impervious (9)

- 1 One with class, using Michigan accent? (8)
- 2 Brief fellow lost is being located (5)
- 3 How to get a binder (being disorganised)? (14)
- 4 Introduce what's required, including motorway system (7)
- 5 Welsh handle gravely granite (7)
- 6 Cusp error recalculated to discover what went before (9)
- 7 Had snack – no spread (6)
- 8 A familiar characteristic of copper? (4-10)
- 9 Long for a crackpot Italian clown (9)
- 10 Regales one, we hear, in a minor way (8)
- 11 Perhaps boxer's not quite the word for this pet? (7)
- 12 Gets on? With 'B' in English attainments? (7)
- 13 Radar screens, say – and range is short (6)
- 14 Girl's spent morning in the country (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive complimentary copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3SL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Peggy Fox, Cheltenham; Revd. David Watson, South Croft; M Corlett, Thaxby; J Valentine, London W16; R Ellett, Salop.

Rovers deny Lazio move for Eriksson

Football
ALAN NIXON

Sven Goran Eriksson emerged last night as the favoured candidate to manage Lazio, despite denials from Blackburn Rovers that he would leave them in the lurch.

Robert Coar, the Rovers chairman, said: "We have a written agreement with Sven that he will come to us in July." However, there have been differences behind the scenes over transfer targets. Rovers are close to completing the £2.5m signing of Polish striker Marek Citko, who was not on Eriksson's wanted list.

Bruce Rioch was approached by West Bromwich Albion last night to fill their managerial vacancy. Rioch, No 2 at Queen's Park Rangers, has emerged as the first choice of the Albion board, who are asking for permission to speak to him this weekend.

If Rioch turns down the offer, West Brom may turn to the Birmingham player-coach Steve Bruce, although Ian Rush, out of favour at Leeds, yesterday became a late addition to a shortlist of applicants which also includes Ray Harford, Danny Wilson and John Rudge.

The Leeds chairman, Bill Fotherby, has confirmed that Parma have paid a fee to keep Tomas Broin until the end of the season. Leeds will receive around £300,000 for the loan deal but the club have valued Broin at more

than £3m if the clubs agree to a permanent transfer.

Leicester City's Neil Lennon has lost an appeal against his sending-off in last week's FA Cup tie with Norwich. Lennon was dismissed with Matt Jackson following an off-the-ball clash in their fourth-round match.

Brighton's proposed groundshare at Gillingham has run into trouble after Gillingham Council wrote to the Football League to oppose the move. However, a successful second round of talks yesterday at the Centre of Dispute Resolution in London be-

Keegan wishes Dalglish well

Kevin Keegan has applauded the choice of Kenny Dalglish, who succeeded him as manager of Newcastle United earlier this month. "I'll always have an interest in Newcastle United – I love the club. I think Kenny is the right choice for the new manager and I wish him all the best."

tween the Brighton chairman, Bill Archer, and Dick Knight, head of the consortium trying to take over the club, have offered hope. A statement issued by the Centre said that the two had "made further progress in working out a framework for a potential restructuring of the club."

Bradford have signed the Portuguese striker Edinho from Victoria Guimaraes for £250,000.

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IMAGE OF THE WEEK There's more than a hint of arrogance about these peacocks. Much preening. They were spotted in the grounds of Saltwood Castle, Kent - the home of newly selected Tory candidate Alan Clark. A chap who displays more than a hint of the peacock himself. Photograph: Brian Harris, using 160 ASA film, 180mm lens, 250th of second at f5.6. To order a print of this picture for £14, call 0171-293 2534

SERIALS
DIVISION



thelongweekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 1 FEBRUARY 1997

For years after my marriage ended, Maurice and Irena pretended to envy my freedom; secretly they amused themselves with the challenge of finding me a second wife. On my visits to Toronto they connived like teenagers. Lunches, family parties, faculty dinners - every event a potential romantic minefield, with Maurice planting the bombshells. Maurice would make the introductions and then scam. I was accustomed to his refrain: "Now Jakob, I know this woman..." and remained unmoved.

But sometimes the world disrobes, slips its dress off a shoulder, stops time for a beat. If we look up at that moment, it's not due to any ability of ours to pierce the darkness, it's the world's brief bestowal. The catastrophe of grace.

I had been visiting Toronto part of every year for over 18 years before she walked into Maurice and Irena's kitchen.

I don't know what to look at first. Her light-brown hair or her dark-brown eyes or her small hand disappearing into the shoulder of her dress to adjust a strap.

Michaela is an administrator at the museum," says Maurice as he makes his exit.

Her hand is a palace. She moves through history with the fluency of a spirit, mourns the burning of the library at Alexandria as if it happened yesterday. She discusses the influence of trade routes on European architecture, while still noticing the pattern of light across a table.

There's no one left in the kitchen. All around us are glasses and small towers of dirty dishes. The noise of the party in the other room. Michaela's hips lean against the kitchen counter. Voluptuous scholar. Michaela has only recently met Irena. She's asking after her.

I find myself telling Michaela a story that's a dozen years old, the story of Tomas's birth, about my experience of his soul.

"When Tomas was born, he was very premature. He weighed less than three pounds."

I had put on a gown, scrubbed my hands and arms to the elbows, and Irena led me in to

WORDS OF THE WEEK

The Independent's reviewer summed up *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels thus: 'I can't imagine a better novel being published this year.' Here is an extract from this luminous first novel

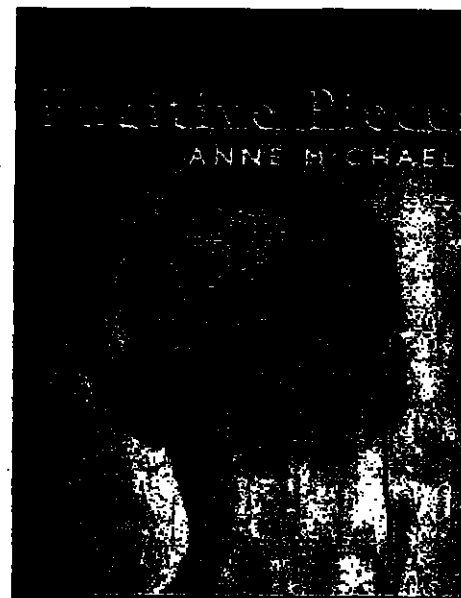
see him. I saw what I can only call a soul, for it was not yet a self, caught in that almost transparent body. I have never before been so close to such palpable evidence of the spirit, so close to the almost invisible musselman whose eyes in the photos show the faint stain of a soul. Without breath, the evidence would vanish instantly. Tomas in his clear plastic womb, barely bigger than a hand.

Michaela has been looking down at the floor. Her hair, glossy and heavy and parted on the side, covers her face. Now she looks up. Suddenly I'm embarrassed at having spoken so much. Then she says: "I don't know what the soul is. But I imagine that somehow our bodies surround what has always been."

Standing together on the winter sidewalk, in the white darkness, I know even less than lamplight in a window, which knows how to pour itself into the street and arouse the longing of one who waits.

Her hair and hat circle her quiet face. She's young. There are twenty-five years between us. Looking at her I feel such pure regret, such clean sadness, it's almost like joy. Her hat, the snow, remind me of Akhmatova's poem where, in two lines, the poet shakes her fists then closes her hands in prayer: "You're many years late, how happy I am to see you."

The winter street is a salt cave. The snow has stopped falling and it's very cold. The cold is spectacular, penetrating. The street has been silenced, a theatre of whiteness, drifts



like frozen waves. Crystals glisten under the streetlights. She points out her impractical boots, "party shoes," and then I feel her small leather glove around my arm. Michaela lives above a bank. Her flat is a monastic cell of a sensuous order. I've entered an old world; the specifications of a dream.

Magazines - Nature, Archaeology, The Conservator - and piles of books - novels, art history, children's stories - teeter on the floor next to the couch. Shoes left in the middle of the room; a shawl flung on the table. The clutter of hibernation. Jumbled rooms breathe dimly in the shallow light. The dark autumn fabrics, the rugs and heavy furniture, a wall of small framed photographs, a child's lamp in the shape of a horse - all seem in defiance of the strict world of accounting in the bank below.

I'm a thief who has climbed in through a window only to find himself struck frozen by a feeling of homecoming. The impossibility of it; the luck. I wait for Michaela to return with tea. I feel the malaise of the warm room, the peace of the immaculate snowfall. Michaela's cramped rooms have cast a spell. I'm already painted into the Rembrandt dimness.

She comes back, carrying a tray to the low living-room table; a silver pot, glasses edged in silver. Her shoes off, now wearing thick socks, she looks even younger. Now I see in Michaela's face the goodness of Beatrice de Luma, the Marrano angel of Ferrara, who reclaimed her faith and gave refuge to other exiles of the Inquisition. ... In Michaela's face, the loyalty of generations, perhaps the devotion of a hundred Kievan women for a hundred faithful husbands, countless evenings in close rooms under the sheets, discussing family problems; a thousand intimacies, dreams of foreign lands, first nights of love, nights of love after long years of marriage. In Michaela's eyes, ten generations of history, in her hair the scents of fields and pines, her cold, smooth arms carrying water from springs...

"Tea," she asks, pushing newspapers onto the rug, clearing a place. From the book *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels published by Bloomsbury this week at £15.99. Call Excel Cash Sales on 01634 297123 to order your copy. Free p&p to UK mainland.

INSIDE

John Walsh meets Caryl Phillips

Immigrant who moved from the margins to the centre **page 3**

Bruce Chatwin: The uninvolved voyeur

'He wrote beautifully but never deeply'. Books **page 6**

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AIR NEW ZEALAND

The 1997 Olympian Games

William Hartston found plenty to play with at the International Toy & Hobby Fair at Olympia

Last Christmas may still linger in the memory, but it is already too late for any games and toy inventors who have not yet perfected their products for Christmas 1997. The British International Toy & Hobby Fair has just finished at Olympia, where retailers meet inventors and manufacturers, and plans are set for filling up toy-shop shelf space for next winter.

A recent survey by NPD Eurotoys Consumer Panel reveals some interesting facts about our toy-buying habits:

The total value of the Traditional Toy market in Britain in the first nine months of 1996 was £662m (up 6 per cent on the previous year).

51.6 per cent of all toys were bought as Christmas presents.

78 per cent of all toys (and 88 per cent of all dolls) are bought by women.

68.8 per cent of toys are bought for the purchaser's own child or grandchild.

For every £1 spent on daughters, £1.21 is spent on sons.

Children aged 4-5 have the most spent on them.

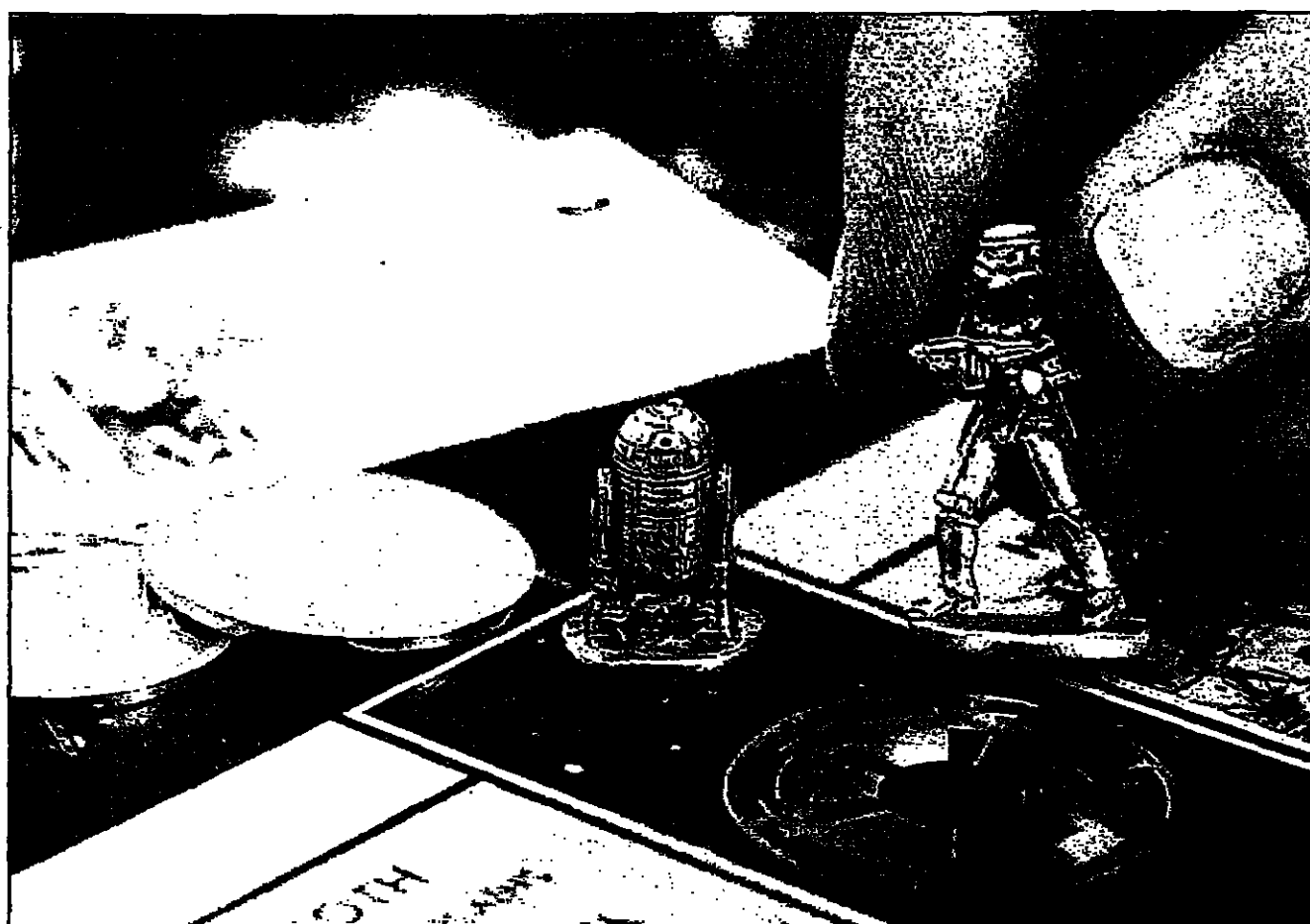
The average amount of money spent on a single toy was £6.91.

Furthermore, according to the government's family expenditure survey, the average UK family spent £1.41 a week on toys, games and hobbies in 1993, with the Welsh spending 50 per cent more than the national average.

Beneath those statistics lurks a hugely creative industry and massive marketing expertise. With 420 exhibitors at Olympia, it is far from easy to give an overview of the exhibition as a whole, but there seemed to be a strong emphasis on extending established concepts into new dimensions.

That has happened most literally in the world of the jigsaw, with a number of companies producing highly attractive three-dimensional jigsaw puzzles.

"Puzz3D" from Waddingtons won the "Most Innovative Toy of the Year" award with its range of jigsaw scale models of famous buildings, including the Taj Mahal, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Eiffel Tower and a 4ft-tall Big Ben. Prices range from £14.99 to £40 and they may take



Monopoly meets Star Wars: Advance to Tatooine, if you pass Go, collect 200 credits

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

from eight to 40 hours to put together between 225 and 1500 pieces. (Available in the shops from March.)

If you want something perhaps even more attractive that takes up less space, look out for "Sculpture Puzzles" from The Really Useful Games Co. These are essentially sculptures cut into thin slices that can be reassembled on a central spike. There's a cheat sheet if you just want to make the sculpture - or you can make it still more difficult by breaking up the individual slices into mini-jigsaws of their own. Look out for the *Venus de Milo* and *Rodin's The Kiss* which will appear in the shops later this month.

Another noticeable trend was the tendency to jazz up traditional games, though sometimes this is little more than repackaging for specific marketing purposes. Does "Monopoly" - still the top money-earner in the games and puzzles market - really profit by linking itself to the *Star Wars* anniversary celebrations? Do we really need Darth

Vader instead of an old boot, and Dagobah Swamp where Old Kent Road used to be? (Still, it looks jolly good value at only 40 credits.) Beneath all the SF gibbering, however, is still the game we know and love.

That other old favourite, Scrabble, has spawned some more original offshoots. Head to Head Scrabble from Spears is a nice way of combining the dice from Boggle with the anagram-forming and scoring ideas of Scrabble in a two-person game. Seven dice with letters on all their faces are shunted to and fro across a track, automatically shuffling themselves as they go. Score more points and push the rack nearer your opponent; reach the end and you've won the game. For real Scrabble addicts, there are Scrabble Cards and a new Travel Scrabble Deluxe for those who cannot bear a train journey without their favourite game.

Another Scrabble derivative is Numbler from Positive Games Ltd. This is one of those brilliant ideas that's so

simple you wonder why nobody thought of it before. It's also one of those rare games with genuine educational value that parents can play with their children. Put simply, it's Scrabble with numbers and mathematical symbols, +, -, x, ÷ and =, instead of letters on the tiles. The objective is to make, in the usual crossword format, sums with correct answers. (On sale now at selected outlets in Norfolk; shortly to be generally available. Price around £14.95)

Finally there are the board games. You can pretend you're at the Olympics with "Games" from Worldwide Games, (simulated track and field events on an attractive board, with general sporting knowledge questions thrown in), or conduct a court case with "Libel" (the Really Useful Games Co). But the one to look out for is Snap Election (from Prowler Productions). With Sleaze cards and Banana Skins, this is just the thing for the present feverish political climate. More on this game shortly.

Word games:

Since the highly success of "Articulate" a few years ago, we have seen several games that seemed designed for hyperactive and generally inebriated PR people to shout words at each other and score points. If you like that sort of thing, you'll enjoy "Think" ("The game of thinking by linking by lateral thinking") from Really Useful Games, where you have to form concepts such as film or song titles from a set of cards with pictures on them that really have nothing to do with the concept at all. A good game if you like shouting and arguing about the rules. "Of course a picture of a lion is 'Brief Encounter' - how long do you think an encounter with a lion would last?" Personally, I think I'll stick to Scrabble.

Magic:

The new range of tricks from Marvin's Magic proudly claim to be the "first and only sets ever to be officially recommended by the world famous Magic Circle". And you have to promise, when buying them, that you'll never, under pain of excommunication from the Magic Circle, reveal to anyone how the tricks are done. From simple packs of doctored playing cards to huge compendiums of 250 tricks, the range offers something for all levels of expertise and expenditure. Look out for "Marvin's Magic Shop" a box of tricks in which the packaging itself transforms into a Magic Cabinet. A word of caution, however, before you decide to bemuse your family: some of the tricks need hours of practice for a really slick performance.

Two-player strategy games:

There is a trend away from complex strategy games - which never quite seem to establish themselves well enough to challenge chess, bridge and backgammon - towards small-scale games that are over in a few minutes. David Westedge Ltd offer an interesting range of well-produced games, including Quiko - a noughts-and-crosses game with a difference. Quarto, an infuriating strategy game on a 4-by-4 board. Quads, a perplexing pattern-making game and Pylos a game of pyramid-building with black and white spheres (All these are produced by the French company Gigamic.)

All these games seem to be at just that level of difficulty at which the human kind cannot quite cope.

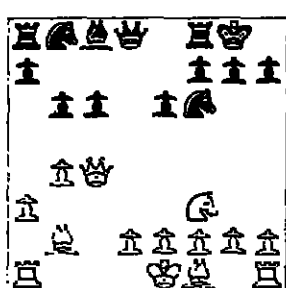
Pick of the rest of the new games

Jigsaws:

Look out for the "Eye-Popping Portable Picture Puzzle", one of the developments from the "Where's Wally" books in which part of the puzzle is to find the single image, with a hugely complex scene, of a single Wally figure. This circular puzzle with originally shaped pieces is good value at £9.99 and makes a change from conventional jigsaws. There's also a Magical Wally Wand for £4.99 a splendidly time-wasting plastic stick with myriad shapes glugging around in a viscous liquid, but only one with a picture of Wally on it. Find it, shake it up, and lose it again.

For conventional jigsaws, Ravensburger offer everything Disney's Lion King in 40-piece to Bruegel's Tower of Babel in 4000.

Chess William Hartston



Overly aggressive moves are justified only if your opponent has made a mistake. Just as a boxer must momentarily drop his guard before he throws a punch, unprompted acts of aggression on the chessboard invite retribution - unless they are themselves the correct way to punish the opponent for a previous error.

That's why games between top grandmasters often tend to be on the dull side. There's nothing exciting about correctness. Even Kasparov keeps his aggressive intentions under restraint until he senses that his opponent has made a mistake. But how can you tell whether your opponent has done enough to justify your playing boldly?

Look at the diagram position, from Komarov-Razuvayev, Reggio Emilia, 1997. Black has just played a...c6, which looks a little odd. When he has a nice open diagonal from b7 to f3 for his bishop, why block it? The answer must be that he has other plans for the bishop. His intention is to exploit White's

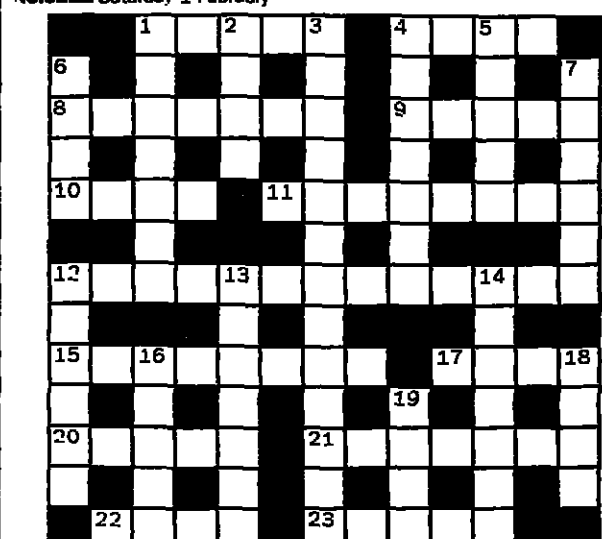
undeveloped K-side by opening lines on the other wing. He'll play a5, then exchange pawns on b4 and rooks on a1. The bishop will come to a6, leaving White vulnerable on the a0-f1 diagonal, the a-file and having a weak b-pawn. White, however, clearly thought 9...c6 outrageous. So Komarov decided to punish Black for his impudence. He continued 10.g4! a5 11.g5 Nd5 12.Rg1!!

Was such aggression justifiable? Personally I'd never play anything as vulgar as 10.g4 and 12.Rg1, but perhaps that's why I was always better at drawing games than winning them. In this game, it certainly turned out well. Black must have missed the idea of 15.Rxg7+! until it was already too late. Had he seen it coming, he would probably have played 11...Ne8 instead of Nd5. Here are the full moves:

White: Komarov
Black: Razuvayev
1 Ng3 Nf6 16 Qg4 Kh8
2 c4 e6 17 Bxf6 Rxf6
3 Ne3 Bb4 18 Ng5 Nd7
4 Qc2 0-0 19 Rxg6 Rg6
5 a3 Bxc3 20 Qd4 N7f6
6 Qxc3 d5 21 Nf4 Nxd4
7 b4 dxc4 22 Qxf4 hxa7
8 Qxc4 b6 23 Qf3 Be4
9 Bh2 c6 24 Qxc6 Re8
10 g4 a5 25 Qa4 Re8
11 g5 Nd5 26 Rxa3 Bxc2
12 Rg1 axb4 27 Rb3 Rxc3
13 Qd4 f6 28 fxc3 Bxf1
14 gxf6 Qxf6 29 Kxf1 h6
15 Rxg7 Kxg7 30 Qd4 1-0

concise crossword

No.3211 Saturday 1 February



ACROSS

- One of the apostles (5)
- Raised (4)
- Worry (7)
- Alcoholic drink (5)
- Otherwise (4)
- Celestial (8)
- Nick (6,7)
- Eastern (8)
- Glide over lightly (4)
- Angry (5)
- Old form of punishment (7)
- Caledonian (4)
- Went by car (5)

DOWN

- Sunshade (7)
- Accurate (4)
- Approved formally (6-7)
- S American country (7)
- Scottish town (5)
- Sword (4)
- Coloured pencil (6)
- Irrational fear (6)
- Nunnery (7)
- Irritating (7)
- Biblical patriarch (5)
- Irish county (4)
- As well (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Brougham, 5 Styx (Broomsticks), 9 Papaw, 10 Tsarina, 11 Inscrubing, 14 Mother-of-pearl, 16 Depreciate, 20 Grow-up, 21 Looft, 22 Dury, 23 Dynamite, DOWN: 1 Baptisms, 2 Opposite, 3 Cover, 4 Autobiography, 6 Twig, 7 X-ray, 8 Catnap, 12 Macaroni, 13 Alienate, 15 Exeunt, 17 Cella, 18 Aged, 19 Fort.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South

North		East	
♠ A J 8	♥ 6 5 4	♠ 6 5	♥ 10 9 8 7
♦ J 8 2	♣ J 8 5 3	♦ K 10 5 3	♣ K 7 2
South		West	
♠ K Q 10 9 7	♥ A 3 2	♠ 4 3 2	♥ K Q J
♦ A Q 6 4	♣ 4	♦ 9 7	♣ A Q 10 9 6

This deal, from a recent pairs event, illustrates the big advantage that the "bashers" have over the scientists: the opponents are left in the dark. South opened 1♠. West overcalled with 2♣ and North raised to 2♠. After East had passed, South could have suggested game in a variety of ways according to agreement. 3♥ - "I need help in this suit": 3♦ - "This is my second suit, how do you rate your hand?": or 3♣ - a short suit trial. In real life, South adopted what is known in the trade as the "Landy game-try"

Perplexity

"I fail to understand," said the professor, "this business about getting children to eat vegetables - I mean it's all a question of nutritional values. Just impress upon them that BEANS plus POTATO equals SPROUT, and there'll be no trouble."

(Sandra Landy was an aggressive but highly successful player) - he bid 4♠ and tried to make it. Prospects were grim when West led the ♠K and dummy appeared. East signalled dutifully with his ten and declarer ducked. He won the heart continuation and, as there was really no genuine way to succeed, decided to put his opponents in and see if they could find a way to go wrong. It was West who had to win and, although a peaceful switch to trumps might seem automatic, decided to switch to the ♠9. Do you see what I mean about giving them the chance to go wrong?

The diamond switch went to the jack, king and ace and, after crossing to dummy with a trump, declarer led ♠8. Rather gloomily, East covered with the ten and the vital seven fell under the queen.

You can see the rest: declarer drew trumps in two more rounds, ending in dummy, and was able to lead ♠2 for a successful finesse of the four against East's five. It was hardly surprising that the game in spades was not made at many tables.

The first correct answer opened on 12 February will win a copy of the new Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

18 February answers: Chris Evans (grave shines); Kenny Dalglish (lanky shingled); Slobodan Milosevic (colossal mid-bovine). Winner: Catherine Fearnhead.

Games people play Pandora Melly learns about sex and Socrates

Michael Kaye, 60, chairman of M&C Saatchi

I used to relax by doing old maths papers. I got in to Cambridge to read classics, which was much easier than mathematics; now I do the brain-teasers in *Another Newspaper*. I used to find them too difficult when I was 23, but at 35 I grew cleverer - or they grew easier. I like it because it is a solitary pleasure. You don't have to play with people who might not be as intelligent as yourself - you can see why it annoys the rest of my family.

They hide the supplement before I've looked at it, which puts me in a horrible mood for the whole weekend. A good Sunday is when I've finished the bloody thing before I come downstairs. My wife says we have all suffered this for 20 years.

Most of the puzzles are mathematical. Last week's was a straightforward letters-for-digits substitution. I can't even remember the weekend before. Something about a husband of 95

and a wife of 85, which I regard as a bad answer. It's not very realistic, is it? "Punctuation to be ignored," as you might say in crossword parlance.

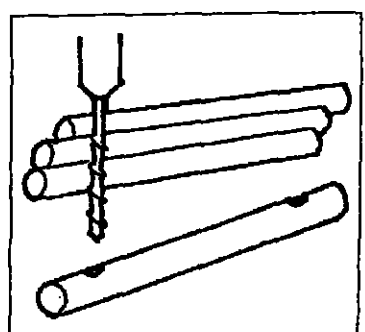
My wife gets cross because she thinks I do it to shut out the rest of humanity. I suppose my interest in such things is an adherence to the Socratic principle which maintains that the nice thing about growing old is that you can concentrate on thinking instead of being distracted by thoughts about sex. Socrates also said that death will be the best night's sleep you'll ever have.

I think it's a well-established theory that people who regularly exercise their brains don't go quite so gaga, and they seem to live longer. Bridge works well: my old Ma went on playing bridge until she was 90, which I think can be taken as reasonable proof.

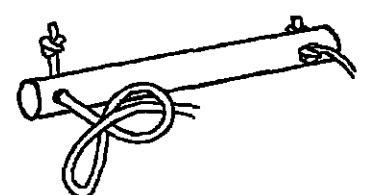
Perplexity and the *Crossword* are available at the foot of this page. *Plato's Republic* is available in the Penguin Classics series at £2.50.

Don't junk it... use it How to form a Platonic relationship with soap

Plato thought that the universe was kept in its state of motion by the "spindle of necessity". Here is how to turn a thick spindle, or left-over pieces of dowelling, into a soap dish that allows proper draining. All you need is dowelling, string, a hand-drill and a philosophical attitude.



Take four pieces of dowelling, or any other tubular bits of wood that may be lying around. You'll need sections of minimum length 11-12cm for a single bar of soap. Pick a drill bit close to the diameter of the string you are going to use. Drill a hole through each end of all the pieces.

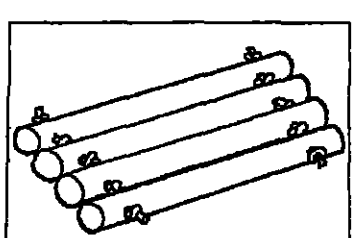


Take two pieces of string, and thread them through the holes. If

you want the completed object to last, you should use nylon or polyester - or plastic-coated string to keep it waterproof and rot-proof.

Tie stopper knots on both sides of the hole. I always use a figure-of-eight knot. This has two great advantages: first, I can remember how to tie it; secondly, I can also remember what it is called.

Thread the next dowel on to the string, push it right up to the knot and tie another stopper knot to hold it in place.



To complete, the wood may be stained and varnished. For the utmost durability, yacht varnish is to be recommended. The completed object is a water-resistant, self-draining, soap raft - though (unless you use balsa wood) not buoyant enough to keep soap afloat in the bath.

Oh, and I almost forgot one extremely important piece of advice: while making this soap-dish, you should make sure that at least one sturdy piece of dowelling is left over at the end and stored in a safe place. You will be needing it next week when we shall be making a portable toilet-roll holder from a metal coat-hanger.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

Songmaster of the diaspora



John Walsh meets...
Caryl Phillips

Caryl Phillips is a soul in transit. He seems to exist in a state of chronic flight and restless travel. He spent Christmas cruising the Caribbean researching locations for his next book, *Atlantic Sound*, about the 18th-century slave trade. Earlier, he was in Singapore chairing something for the British Council. He talks with animation about his recent trip to the Amazon with the poet Glyn Maxwell. He flew in from New York to Holland last week, to see his Dutch publishers, and landed in London on Monday, to perform the publicity dance routine for his new novel *The Nature of Blood*.

Beckoned briefly in the bar at the Russell Hotel, round the corner from his publishers, Faber & Faber, he extends a languid hand to his glass of indifferent Cotes de Roussillon. He is a very cool operator, dramatically dressed from collar to toe in layers of dark black, if there is such a thing. His shirt collar is buttoned to the neck but ties in the best Versace style. His hair is cropped like a bouncer's, and he has long abandoned the professorial specs he once wore. Now that he is a professor—of English and Creative Writing at Amherst College, Massachusetts—he looks like a model for Paul Smith tailoring. It is no wonder he has an awesome reputation as a bouffant swordsman. The only false note is struck by his accent, which remains flatly and defiantly stuck in Yorkshire, in all its Geoffrey Boycott splendour.

All his whizzing around the globe is quite appropriate for a writer whose big themes are displacement, diaspora, the quality of being a stranger, the unfamiliarity of the concept of home. Although his writing career began in the millpond of naturalism, with *The Final Passage* (1985), an autobiographical account of his parents' emigration from the West Indies to England in the late Fifties, he gradually outgrew the image of the bookish immigrant and became instead the songmaster of the diaspora. With *Cambridge* (1991) he delved into the past and filled it with voices; principally those of a spinsterish Victorian governess travelling to a Caribbean plantation, and of Cambridge, the slave who becomes an English gentleman before reverting to slavery at the hands of Fate, pirates and history. It was a dazzling act of historical reclamation, trumped by *Crossing the River* (1993), an epic lament for the children of slavery, which crosses continents and generations to tell how the lost blacks turned up in obscure corners of Western history over two centuries. The quality of the writing—the haunted, floating voices from an unknown oral history—carried it on to the Booker shortlist. Now comes *The Nature of Blood*, in which Phillips forsakes his chosen territory of black deracination, and chooses instead to write about the Jews.

"Yeah, I know, writing fiction about the Holocaust is a minefield," he said, "not because I happen not to be Jewish, but because of the subject itself. Cynthia Ozick wrote a marvellous essay saying

there are so many revisionist historians around—so many arseholes—claiming the Holocaust was a fiction, that to write fiction about it is playing into their hands."

But why was he taking on the subject at all? What was he doing writing about death camps and gas chambers? He smiled at such PC fastidiousness. "I get a lot of those questions from audiences in Canada and America. But I just don't believe in what the Americans call 'cultural appropriation'. My response to it is rather aloof and snooty. I just say, Where do we stop? Do we tell Thomas Hardy he shouldn't write about Tess because he's a bloke? Or tell William Styron he shouldn't write *The Confessions of Nat Turner* because he isn't a slave?"

The Nature of Blood is bound to provoke raised eyebrows, raised hackles and a lot of bewilderment. It tells, in parallel and cross-crossing narratives, the stories of Eva, a young Jewish girl in an unnamed European country, as the noose of Nazi threat gradually tightens round her every day; of the Jews of 15th-century Portugal, near Venice, an apparently assimilated community of races where the disappearance of a young boy is barbarically punished behind a veneer of logic, legality and common propriety; of the great Othello, Shakespeare's black Moorish soldier who commands the Venetian army and courts the lovely Desdemona; of a struggle of Zionist Europeans camped under British arms in Cyprus, dreaming of Palestine; and of other, unimagined voices. Phillips's intention is clear enough—to suggest links between the barbarities

'I'm interested in how people respond to historical events. And what enables them to survive'

of different eras—but there's a perfunctory quality about the Euro-Jewish sections, and a wildly expressionistic treatment of the final horrors of the camps that seems an ill-judged literary exercise. Phillips himself talks a lot about "thematic structures" and "character bridges" but concedes: "It's all about how somebody wakes up one morning to find their world has been turned completely upside down, for reasons that are out of their control. I'm interested in how people respond to historical events—whether it's to do with religion or political instability or economic migration—that arrive to screw them up. And what enables them to survive."

For an accomplished writer, Phillips can seem oddly naive about the motivation behind his writing. He claims that the Victorian spinster in *Cambridge*, for instance, the voice of the sceptical English establishment inspecting an outpost of empire, apparently changed her whole essence in hindsight. "I couldn't tell at the time why this woman's voice started taking over the novel," Phillips said. "It was only a year later that I realised. When I was writing it, I was 30, the same age as

the woman. She'd grown up feeling an outsider, feeling valueless, and had to make a self-defining journey across the Caribbean in order to find herself. Well, that was my life. It just happened that I was able to see those elements in the life of a 30-year-old white middle-class spinster". And the correspondences hadn't occurred to him while he was writing the book? "I'd no idea," he said, disingenuously. "I'm never conscious of what I'm doing when I'm writing. I just focus on getting the language and the characterisation right."

Phillips's identification with his characters suggests a vastly solipsistic nature. As you talk to this guarded, proud, stubbornly self-made and self-motivating man (you can see how it was that Michael Grade could hand over £2.7m to him to co-produce a TV film of *The Final Passage*, and how Peter Hall could have been persuaded to direct it), it seems, for a moment, quite in order that he should put large historical concerns at the service of his own personal obsessions. Take the genesis of *The Nature of Blood*: "I'm perfectly conscious of what my relationship with the Holocaust is," said Phillips. "It was the first story I wrote, at 14 or 15. I came home from school one day and watched *The World at War* on television. The series had just reached the concentration camps, and I can remember being terribly shocked—and I also remember the clean impulse to write a story. I wrote about a little Dutch boy, who couldn't understand why his parents made him wear a yellow star, when he felt he was the same as other kids. Then he and his parents are rounded up in cattle trucks, they're

on their way to the camp, and the boy jumps out, banging his head as he falls. He lies there, unconscious, bleeding to death—but the sun catches the yellow star on his shirt, a farmer sees the reflection and comes and saves him. So paradoxically, he's saved by the very thing that makes him a victim.

"Well the impulse behind that is, of course, that I was the kid—the kid at school who felt different, the only black kid in the class, with that horror that you could be ostracised just like that. One day, you're playing football with friends, the next day, something would happen and you'd be shunned. Or people would tell racist jokes and you couldn't understand how exactly to orientate yourself. I felt an affinity to this horror—not the larger one of the gas chambers, obviously, but the smaller horror of what it'd be like for the kid to feel the rag pulled from beneath his feet."

Phillips was born on St Kitts in the Caribbean in 1958. When he was four months old, his parents emigrated to England, part of the mass recruiting of West Indians as British citizens to help alleviate the post-war labour shortage. The family fetched up in Leeds, and the young Phillips set about turning into a working-class Northern kid.

"It was a horrible white working-class council estate," he recalls, "and we were the only black family on it. Basically, you learned to do two things—fight and run. The first thing people did to you at school was to come up and say, 'Oi you, nigger', and if you didn't whack them in the face, you were fucked. It sounds very crude, but you just had to."

This induction into Hard Knocks College was accompanied by a gradual recognition that the canon of available literature didn't seem to have much to do with him. "I used to buy books that told me about me, so I'd read John Braine and David Storey. It was only when I was older that I realised I wasn't only a northern working-class kid, I was a black northern working-class kid. I had to look for books that would tell me about the other side of me that wasn't satisfied by reading

Room at the Top." He turned, by necessity, to American literature and the thriving black radical tradition of James Baldwin, Ralph (Invisible Man) Ellison and Richard (Native Son) Wright. The experience of poor Stateside blacks in New York and the bigoted South had little relevance for the Leeds scholar, but as Phillips eloquently puts it: "You saw yourself in the prism of what you could find. I knew there was going to have to be a new literature, a synthesis of being black and being British."

So he proceeded to supply it. In barely three years, he produced three novels, a brace of plays and a slightly paranoid study of Continental racism entitled *The European Tribe*. This burst of energy left him, however, with an emptiness that prompted a long-delayed search for a home.

"There's a point at which you have to decide why you're writing. For certain writers, ambition takes you a certain way, through your first couple of books, and then it becomes just the thing you do. I felt I had a bee in my bonnet about something. I had to find out what my subject was." To this end, he decided to leave the glamorous metropolis at the height of his fame, and embrace his island background. "It was the time to spend some time in the Caribbean, trying to figure out what the hell I was doing. I felt I'd been writing out of an energy pack that was all ambition and cunningly-disguised autobiography."

The St Kitts bigwigs were proud to have their home-grown published novelist back in town; everyone else left him alone with his clearly absurd delusions of genius. "I was regarded with great detachment," he said. "It was a little different from the Groucho Club..."

From it emerged *Cambridge* and all that followed—a trilogy of works passionately (but so detachedly) passionate) looking for links between Africa, the old world of Europe and the new world of the Americas, and inventing voices that make these voyages the reader's own. "Yeah of

course there's a continuity between the three books," says Phillips. "They're all to do with journeys. It's the way my life has been for the last five years—but it also reflects the nature of my concerns."

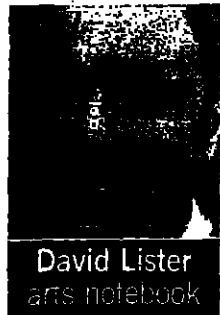
Hardly drawing breath from arguing with the Jewish lobby over *The Nature of Blood*, Phillips is also about to publish *Extravagant Strangers*, an anthology of pieces by British authors born outside the UK. It's been called *A Literature of Belonging* (a subtitle to wrench the heartstrings) because of its implicit search by writers to find a home, or at least a cultural accommodation, with the United Kingdom, just as Phillips's parents did in 1958: just as he himself does with his books. "I've never had a problem about 'joining in' with English literature, once I perceived that Eng Lit has a strong tradition of being reinvigorated by outsiders," he says. So did he mind being thought of a "post-colonial" writer, a black writer, a Caribbean writer, an English writer? Which?

"As a writer you can't do a damn thing about the categories people put you in. Do I look for VS Naipaul under 'Colonial Literature'? Do I look for Salman Rushdie under 'Indian and Pakistani Literature'? I don't know, and I don't bother." As an academic, it's beyond question that writing in English in the last 20 years had been massively influenced by what they call "the margins"—the old colonies, the Commonwealth, the Empire, India, Australia. But when you look at people like Michael Ondaatje, the Dutch/Sri Lankan extraction author of *The English Patient*, or Peter Carey, the Australian author of *Osman and Lucinda*, or Derek Walcott, the St Lucian Nobel poet, they don't live in the margins any more. They live in the centre now. Ondaatje in Toronto. Carey and Walcott in New York.

"It's not that the centre has co-opted the margins. It's that the margins have made it to the centre." With that, the voice of the marginal, the dispossessed and the home-forlorn seized his black coat and set off on his restless travels once more.

The election approaches and with it three slim volumes from Penguin, each expounding the cause of the major parties. To be published on 17 February, *Why Vote Labour?* ditto Conservative and ditto Lib Dem they all have the backing of the party leaders. I opened my advance copies with a frisson of anticipation as to how the cultural policies of the parties would differ.

My first evening is spent curled up in bed with David Willetts MP and the Conservative case. I waded through such predictable

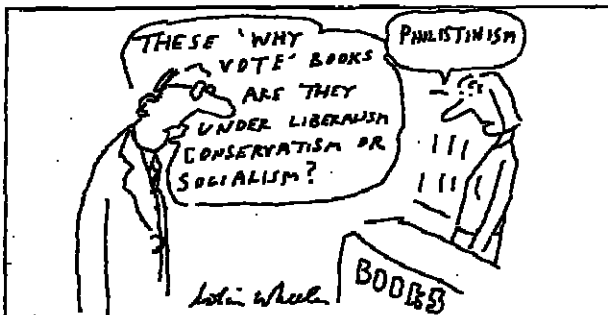


David Lister
arts notebook

chapter headings as "The Free Market", "Schools: Choice or Uniformity" and the artily inverted "Order and Law". But of art itself, no mention. Typically Tory, I sighed. For all Mrs Bottomley's fine words, a cultural cop-out.

Next I turned to Labour and Tony Wright MP, whose writings have been described by Tony Blair as "a route map for New Labour". A section on "A Civic Vision" must surely include a cultural vision. But Mr Wright's civic vision is that "this election is about fundamentals. From health to welfare, jobs to education, crime to the constitution." The artistic fundamentals do not make it into the 111-page statement.

And so to the Lib Dems and Lord Wallace of Saltaire. A chapter entitled "The Quality of Our Society" causes the heart to skip a beat. Here at last culture must rear



its neglected head. Well up to a point, Lord Wallace. He has a bee in his bonnet. But it's not a bee one generally hears when two or more theatregoers are gathered together. He writes: "Lib Dems regard the piecemeal

selling off of the historic buildings of the crown estate in Whitehall... as beyond reasonable justification." So there it is. The actual manifestos are yet to come. But the three intellectual treatises contain effectively

nothing about the arts. Sir Richard Eyre, director of the National Theatre, opined recently that the parties seem to view the arts as a four-letter word. Worse, it is a word that has not even entered their vocabulary.

Suzanne Vega, American chanteuse, said this week that her new album *Nine Objects of Desire* had caused some friction between herself and her husband, record producer Mitchell Froom. Aside from his complaining, with reference to her honeymoon song, that he would have preferred the sexy songs to be about him

and the funny ones about someone else, there were also arguments when he demanded to know what certain of her more enigmatic compositions were actually about. Suzanne Vega explains: "I mean, as my husband I suppose he has a right to know, but as my producer he really doesn't." Shouldn't that be the other way around?

Next Wednesday at the Royal Festival Hall the BBC Symphony Orchestra performs the world premiere of Diana Burrell's new work *Symphonies of Flocks, Herds and Shoals*. Reflecting her

passion for the sights and sounds of the natural world, the 49-year-old composer promises musical references to birdsong, the herd instincts of animals, and even "the darting movements of fishes". I asked Diana Burrell how she conveys a flock of birds in flight in orchestral terms. She did not even pause for breath. "Flocks—music of brightness and clarity. Air. Intellect. Complex patterns. Wheeling. Circling. Covering large distances. Fast, glittering scherzo." Perhaps with a touch of engine-noise vibrato for the sponsor—Land Rover.

arts & books

Putting the 'um' into millennium

As 'The X-Files' so relentlessly tell us, the truth is out there, banging on the door to the next century and pointing at the hand of God. John Lyttle takes a Manichean view of BSkyB's latest Zeitgeist-buster

The metaphysical serial killer smash *Millennium* arrived on BSkyB on a tidal wave of hard sell (so expensive TV and Sky split the cost) and hype (so shocking it had to be transmitted at 10 o'clock) and saddled with a tag line ready to backfire: "From the makers of The X-Files". So it seemed wise to let high expectations fall to earth, especially as the series also boasted of "pushing the TV envelope" – though if "pushing the TV envelope" means showing things never before seen on the box, the boast is amply fulfilled: bodies are microwaved, lips sewn together, corpses defecated upon, walls soaked in blood. Then again, one backed further off because BSkyB seemed to be not just inviting, but virtually begging for odious comparisons by scheduling producer, wunderkind and cultural impresario Chris Carter's latest trawl through the shadowy recesses of the zeitgeist directly after The X-Files, hoping not only to hold on to its predecessor's audience share, but also to clone its offbeat, but fanatical following. A high-risk strategy. Reputations have been ruined that way.

So, nearly two months on, what do we have? Well, something shrewd, mostly nasty, not to say morally dubious, and perhaps even (if the word still holds any resonance) reactionary; a truth that flies in the face of The X-Files' hard-core anti-establishment raison d'être, but nevertheless a truth that is "out there", albeit camouflaged by Chris ("I love to steal") Carter's strategic steals from every cool pop contemplation of, oh dear, "good v evil" of the last few years. Not to worry; what ought to play as drained and strained, instead seems triumphantly conclusive – or as conclusive as the casually post-modern gets, as if all of the new show's genre models were scattered pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, patiently waiting to be put together so that the public could marvel at the larger picture: The Millennium – the year 2000 and the second coming of Christ, when all the saints come marching in to rout the Beast and end the 1,000-year rule of Satan unbound.

To wit: ex-FBI Frank Black (Lance Henriksen), cursed with the talent, and torment, of seeing the world through madmen's eyes, is a brazen replicant of Will, the ex-FBI agent of Thomas Harris's thriller *Red Dragon*, later the Michael Mann movie, *Manhunter*. The pilot episode's gimmick of live burial hails from *The Vanishing*. Blue Velvet, of course, lends the ear (amputated) plus crawling insect that adorns the second programme. The casting of Terry O'Quinn as sometime sidekick conjures his mass-murdering *Stepfather*. The kidnapping in the third show nods to *The Silence of the Lambs*, which itself took its MO from Ted Bundy (the first-hand borrowing in the name of verisimilitude made the skin crawl, so imagine how a second-hand-me-down makes even the most blasé voyeur feel). And then there's... *Se7en*.

The unlucky number behind David Fincher's oppressive movie masterclass in the ways and means of Old Testament retribution hangs out everywhere, and gets into everything. It lends *Millennium* its grunge palette – Carter quietly hired Gary Wissner, *Se7en*'s art director – is strip-mined for its atmosphere (guilty, jaded, cosmically pained), and raided for its jittery, sub-Super 8 opening credits, right down to the stray, nonsensical/meaningful words – *Hail Mary: Who Cares?*. If *The X-Files* are chiefly pulp and mood pieces, then *Millennium* is a stab at a tone-poem – and insistently poetic. The series is encrusted in literary quotes, from Yeats – yes, "the centre cannot hold" – to the sundry religious verses that introduce each episode: "I have no rest, for trouble comes". With success, Carter has discovered, as many have, that swank can be married to sensationalism, and, moreover, that he has something to say – or, to be precise, lip-synch. For, above all, *Se7en*'s title is taken – and taken literally. As literally as fundamentalists take the Bible, *Se7en* referring, of course, to the statutory complement of deadly sins. *Millennium* too, in its magisterial manner, knows that right is might, and who is in the wrong. Not just the killers, but those others who protest that grey is indeed the universe's colour scheme, those souls – see the misled, sacrificial cult members of episode three – who, in their weakness, have created the decayed conditions that grant our deepest fears flesh.



Not that our hero's immediate environment is dark. It's only his name that is Black – the single sulphurous whiff of ambiguity that Carter, the hip king of conspiracy, confusion and uncertainty, allows himself – if one discounts the casting of Henriksen himself (the rich sociopath who once hunted humans for fun in *Hard Target*). Otherwise, all's light with Black's world, a golden, heavenly light, a nimbus around the bluntly iconographic clapperboard home which, when not solving cases by simply having intuitive flashes (shown, aptly enough, in Manichean black and white), he shares with wife Catherine (Megan Gallagher) and their darling daughter. Though a stalker may have been positioned in the wings, hearth and home offer refuge; *Se7en* reigns supreme here, too. Gallagher, unlike *Se7en*'s Gwyneth Paltrow, hasn't lost her head (yet), but like Paltrow, she's endlessly supportive of her recessive male, less mere mortal, more pure abstraction. Sheer goodness, possibly, just as the Blacks' daughter is Innocence incarnate. The happy family circle is also the magic circle, the solitary safe place – a notion *Millennium* idealises to near-parody, despite *The X-Files* weekly warning that nowhere – no one – is "safe". Arbitrary forces are at work, and barely bothering to hide. Hence *The X-Files* drolly accurate reflection of the suburbs and small towns as magnets for weirdness, replete with cannibals, devil-worshippers, Republicans and incestuous mutants ready to beat your brains out with baseball bats while Johnny Mathis croons "Chances Are". *Millennium* may be a word that evokes a fast-approaching future, but the show is always gazing longingly back to a faked Middle America that never existed, save as propaganda. Remember Ronald Reagan's "It's Morning in America" re-election campaign, similarly larded with understanding wives, obedient children and the prospect of school prayers?

Millennium is ill at ease with anything, and anyone, outside those inflexible confines: God, Mom and Apple Pie. For its stunningly basic dichotomy to hold – this good, that bad – the "alien" must be expelled. *The X-Files* tends to love the alien, or at least to allow it a common humanity. *Millennium*, by contrast, presents victims who are as characterless as the killers; two sides of the same base coin. The unknowableness of the pathological mind is shared by, say, prostitutes (decapitated, but already faceless) and homosexuals – "outsiders" whom *Millennium* turns into outcasts. The "exceptions" whom Mulder would communicate with, and Scully be polite to, *Millennium* treats as meat. So, when a police chief remarks that, in all his years on the force, he has never seen anything as terrifying as the entombed gay man with stitched-up eyes and mouth he saw tonight, Black intones, "Then you've never seen your child in hospital". The fact that there's a difference between concussion and mutilation should be self-evident, or, at least, not weighed. Here, it is, a cruelty that even NBC's plodding *Profiler* is at pains to avoid; but then, the *Profiler* herself is a single woman and mother, and inured to a vulnerability (a separateness) that *Millennium* can only discuss in strictly forensic terms, forgetting that the deity it hunts for is supposed to love us all with equal ardour.

Not that *Millennium* would deign to entertain the thought. Doubt is given no hallowed room here. Watching the show immediately after *The X-Files* is like watching a conversation between two sides of a split personality. Could it be that Chris Carter got tired of asking questions of a universe that didn't return his calls, so he decided to supply his own? Why not? Answers are as part and parcel of Pre-Millennium Tension as the who, what and why, though inevitably less interesting. Questions are by their nature complex, while answers (in TV terms at least) must be simple. Answers have to leave out something, and it transpires that that something is the unavoidable mess, scabrous and compromise that we make of our lives, not knowing, as *Millennium* knows, that this is the door the Devil and his disciples saunter through. *Millennium* knows who forgot to fasten the lock, and, when you stop to think about it, so do you. It is, dear reader, the audience. It is, dear reader, most probably you. *Millennium*: Sundays 10pm BSkyB, Sky 1

A silvermine brings misery

Many film-makers have ventured into the heart of Joseph Conrad's dense narratives. But most come back empty-handed. As adaptations of 'Nostromo' and 'The Secret Agent' loom large, Steven Poole explains why Jo can never be the new Jane

The silver seam of Jane Austen is all but exhausted for the worthy miners in film and television. Casting her lifeless husk aside, they wonder, squinting, who will now satisfy the insatiable public appetite for period drama. You would not bet on the new candidate being a gloomy seafaring Pole, who wrote in his third language, English, and who more or less invented the rag-pulling prismaticism of the modern novel. But Joseph Conrad, who died in 1924, is our man.

Conrad's work divides roughly into two halves. Between 1899 and 1911 was his "great" period, encompassing *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*. After completing the last, Conrad, beset by money problems, suffered a nervous breakdown. Then came *Chance* (1914), a so-called "romance", which despite its extraordinarily knotty architecture became a massive commercial success. Although *The Shadow-Liner* (1917) is indispensable, most of Conrad's other work after *Chance* seemed a weary recapitulation of old themes. Conrad settled comfortably into his role as elder statesman of literature (although he refused a knighthood). Perhaps because this later work is less shockingly new, it has generally been the easier option for Hollywood movie screenwriters than the "great" work. Nearly 90 films have been made of Conrad's tales, but only a handful are worth watching.

Dr Alan Simmons, editor of *The Conradian* magazine and contributor to a new volume, *Conrad on Film*, to be published by Cambridge University Press at the end of the year, is happy to discuss the more interesting celluloid Conrads. One of the problems facing a screenwriter, Simmons believes, is that: "If you try to remain rigidly faithful, you sometimes

miss the spirit. Conrad's full of suggestion." Ridley Scott's first feature, *The Duellists*, adapted from Conrad's short story "A Point of Honour", suffered from this literalness: full of lovingly researched pictorial detail, it yet leaves the viewer cold. (Scott, a man of literary taste, also paid homage to Conrad in the far superior *Alien*, where the spaceship is named *Nostromo*.) Alfred Hitchcock's freer version of *The Secret Agent*, entitled *Saboteur*, is tight and taut, although Hitch later thought he had broken the rules of suspense by letting the bomb go off. Terence Young's *The Rover*, and *An Outcast of the Islands* starring Trevor Howard, are both "remarkably faithful", says Simmons; there is also David Lean's ploddingly beautiful *Lord Jim*, with Peter O'Toole in a reprise of his *Lawrence of Arabia* turn.

Why are most such valiant efforts somehow anaemic, flat? The answer may be this. Conrad famously expends much of his prose on telling the reader what things are not: *Heart of Darkness*, for instance, is studded with negative definitions like "implacable", "impenetrable", "invisible" and so forth. Cinema, on the other hand, embodies an energetic positivism of the image: you can only show what things are. Moreover, a cinematic image is almost inevitably encrusted with superabundant detail, which will dilute the force of those key moments where Conrad deliberately constructs a symbolic picture for the reader. The tension between these two modes of representation, the ironic and the mimetic, is obvious, and herein lies the danger for literal-minded film-makers, a danger analogous to that evoked by slavishly "literal" translations of foreign prose or poetry.

Another problem is that Conrad's genius owes so much to an alchemical fusion of melodrama and metaphysics;



Colin Firth and Serena Scott Thomas as husband and wife in the BBC's 'Nostromo'

tempestuous, rhetorical arguments about ideas of fidelity, truth and death. Now, cinema is these days less equipped or willing than ever to deal in metaphysics (although it would be amusing to watch Quentin Tarantino grapple with Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant*), and if you ditch Conrad's metaphysics, you're throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

One of the best Conrad-inspired films, *Apocalypse Now*, gets round this problem with élan. Updating the action of *Heart of Darkness* to Vietnam, with helicopter gunships and machine guns, Coppola (with co-writer John Milius) takes Conrad's central metaphysical notion of work as an essential "illusion" that preserves man's sanity by distracting him from the "abyss" of reality, and replaces it with what replaced metaphysics in the late 1960s: rock music and LSD.

The contrast is salient with Nicholas Roeg's dully "straight" cable-TV version

of *Heart of Darkness*. It stars an excellent Tim Roth as the narrator and non-hero, Marlow, and an infuriatingly fey John Malkovich as Kurtz (playing a character renowned for his powerfully charismatic voice, Malkovich settles on a lisping, sing-song delivery, which is even less appropriate than Marlon Brando's gurgling whisper in *Apocalypse Now*).

The first shots are the best: slow, tracking close-ups over the hieroglyphically wrinkled grey hide of an elephant. With this opening sequence at least, Roeg manages to suggest Marlow's youthful fascination with maps of Africa and the fateful link with the ivory trade, as well as the ancient animism of the jungle. But for the sort of technical cinematic innovation that could conceivably have complemented Conrad's brilliance, the greatest adaptation never made is undoubtedly Orson Welles's *Heart of Darkness*. It was to have been his first picture with RKO, and Welles, that

master of ventriloquy, planned to shoot it entirely from Marlow's point of view. Unfortunately, the extreme expense involved in long takes with the "subjective camera", and the number of extras required, saw the project aborted, and the world had to make do with *Citizen Kane*.

Now Conrad's greatest work, *Nostromo* (1904), is coming to the small screen, thanks to the BBC (who contributed half the £9m cost) and an international conglomerate headed by Fernando Ghia, co-producer of *The Mission*. This political epic, centring on a silver mine in a fictional South American dictatorship beset by revolution, has been squeezed into four beautifully shot, increasingly gripping 90-minute episodes by the heroic efforts of screenwriter John Hale. Happily this lush *Nostromo*'s successes are more numerous than its faults (the greatest of which is the atrocious performance of Ruth Gabriel as Antonia). Colin Firth (buttoned-up English mineowner), Serena Scott Thomas (radiant, neglected wife) and Albert Finney (fruitfully crumpled Irish doctor) are all excellent. The Italian actor Claudio Amendola in the title role disappoints at first, but grows ever more sweetly convincing.

Especially noteworthy is Ennio Morricone's music. Conrad once professed an artistic debt to the music of Richard Wagner. Fittingly, therefore, Morricone harks back to his spaghetti western scores by building his soundtrack around a repeated three-note Wagnerian leitmotif for *Nostromo* himself, played on an Andean wooden flute and echoing the name "Nostromo" in its rhythm. It is a perfect transference to the screen of Conrad's verbal technique – when *Nostromo* is mentioned in the novel, it is almost always with such repetitive epithets as "the incorruptible" or "the magnificent".

Hale's script does not exactly offer any new technical solutions. He has revised Conrad's time-bending patchwork of wide-angle history and microscopic anthropology into a straightforward narrative. This is the big concession. It is impossible to imagine a television audience coping with Conrad's baffling shifts of perspective, yet the novel's stark, ironising force owed everything to that form. The point is that Conrad is working to question his characters' complacent, myopic view of history as linear progress. Yet the television version cannot help but endorse this linearity. With this inevitable compromise in mind, it is heartening to see how well Hale manages to dramatise the story's politics, without resorting to that screenwriter's index of desperation, the voiceover. This is challenging and courageous television, and should not be judged a failure if ratings are disappointing, for some viewers just will not have the patience.

Conrad, you see, is emphatically not the new Jane. The adaptor and screenwriter Christopher Hampton, whose film of *The Secret Agent* comes out in June, explains laconically: "He offers no consolation. He's just too – corrugated." But *Nostromo* has a persuasive claim to be considered the greatest novel of this century (pace the *Waterstone's* list). And while the coming of age of Conrad films (including Mark Peploe's *Victory* and Bebban Kidron's *Any Foster*) will provoke a secret jealousy in those who cherish this under-read writer and want to keep him to themselves, there is no doubting their audacity. Conrad compared writing fiction to "rescue work carried out in darkness". It is hard to shake the feeling that, when the film people come along and flick on the searchlights, something scuttles away to brood alone in the shadows.

'Nostromo' starts today 9.30pm BBC2

Hold on, let's try that again

With the aid of three assistants, Eddie Izzard gives the ailing art of improvisation some eclectic-shock treatment. By James Rampton



Whose Line Is It Anyway? is, to be frank, no longer compulsory viewing, and people have been whispering that perhaps the last rites should be read to improvisation. It has taken a man with high heels and bright red lipstick to give it the kiss of life again. To his army of camp followers, Eddie Izzard has that sort of power: he can even make a lurid pair of green PVC trousers look cool, for goodness sake. *One Word Improv* is not a one-man show – alongside Izzard, Neil Mullarkey, Suki Webster and Stephen Frost improvise sketches based on one word provided by the audience – but you sense that if almost could be, Izzard's stand-up show,

after all, features many notable routines where he acts out several roles on his own – remember the minn birds in an aeroplane? – and this week he has talked about having to stop himself taking over in *One Word Improv*. It is the perfect stage for him, giving free rein to the most surreal imagination this side of the Dadaists. This is a man who has confessed in the past to his love of “talking bollocks”.

The improvisational fizz certainly goes a bit flat when Izzard is not taking part; you find your eyes drawn to the bar-stools at the side of the stage when he is perched there. At one stage on Thursday at the Albery Theatre, he grabbed the stage-side microphone as if to interrupt the cen-

tre-stage proceedings and heads visibly swivelled in anticipation. Even when he runs out of steam, he raises laughs; at one point, he ground to a halt mid-ramble and admitted to great acclaim: “I’ve no idea what I’m talking about.”

Life is a cabaret

Nick Kimberley listens to Ute Lemper, the Berlin spice girl

Even if we’ve neither read Christopher Isherwood, nor seen Liza Minnelli in *that* film, the words “Berlin Cabaret” conjure up a flickering parade of images that, blurring and fading as we try to bring them into focus, nevertheless seem to embody an era. Ute Lemper exploits this false nostalgia in her publicity, but fortunately there’s more to her talent than a fleeting resemblance to chanteuses past.

She’s a thoroughly modern microphone singer, using the voice in ways that only the mike allows us to appreciate. The Queen Elizabeth Hall may not be *echt kabarettisch* but it’s small enough to bring her and us close together, surely right for a programme of “Berlin Cabaret Songs”. That’s also the title of Lemper’s latest CD, but this was more than mere promotion. The songs have been arranged by Robert Ziegler, whose Matrix Ensemble (here, a brassy septet) provided Lemper’s accompaniment. Ziegler, like Lemper, remains faithful to the *Zeitgeist* without necessarily striving for period instrument authenticity. That would, in any case, be hard to achieve, as much of the work of composers such as Spilliansky and Hollaender survives only in fragments.

Although spirited, Lemper’s CD performances of this material are, if not subdued, then certainly contained. If she can see the whites of her audience’s eyes, she opens up, snarling, pouting, lisping and rasping with infectious glee. She sits pertly on a stool or prowls the stage, squats at its edge, descends into the audience to inflict excruciating embarrassment on those lucky or unlucky enough to attract her attention. She is, in a word, a performer, surviving on the adrenalin of communication.

Tell me it's not true

David Soul should be booked for his part in ‘Blood Brothers’. By David Benedict

For fear of legal reprisals, I shall not name the member of senior management at one of our foremost opera houses who, when asked, immediately sang the theme tune to *Sleazy and Hutch*, complete with Isaac Hayes-esque electric guitar impersonation. For those old enough to remember, Saturday nights were blonde, cool David Soul and frisky Paul Michael Glaser doing for the wrap-around cardigan what Emma Peel had done for black leather.

Peel, of course, was played by Diana Rigg, now an altogether different type of dame and currently starring in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Last year, we were promised David Soul going legit opposite Hannah Gordon in Henry James’s *The Aspern Papers*. Alas, this spectacularly unlikely doubleact collapsed prior to opening but he’s here at last in Willy Russell’s surprisingly tenuous *Blood Brothers*.

nothing new. Kiki Dee, Petula Clark, David, Shaun Cassidy and even Carole King have boosted box-office for the first Greek-tragedy-goes-souise musical but all of the above took the leading roles in this tough, heartfelt story of a mother who loses her sons. Hiring a name to play the marginal role of the narrator is like trying to persuade a child that the best thing about a surprise parcel is the string.



Bloodless: David Soul and Siobhan McCarthy Alpha

Three men and a canary

Ben Thompson wises up to the gimmick gestures of the Eels

The eel is a primeval creature that has stayed pretty much the same since a time before Oasis first entered the album charts. The Eels by contrast are very highly evolved. This shrink-wrapped trio from Echo Park in California have 1997 written through their souls like a stick of rock. And with their thrillingly sleek single “Novocaine for the Soul” poised to sweep them into a state of global enormity, this gig at the Garage in Islington is the probably the last British appearance where the crowd will be able to smell them as well as see them.

The Eels record for the Dreamworks label (a plucky independent concern operated by basement entrepreneurs David Geffen, Jeffrey Katzenberg and Stephen Spielberg), who are clearly taking no chances with their talented protégés. Prior to the band making their entrance, the most officious roddie in rock history doesn’t just put towels out for them, he tests their drinks to check for poison. A canary stands patiently in a cage at the side of the stage, ready to give up its life in the event of an enemy gas attack.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW			
David Benedict			
	THE CONCERT	THE FILM	THE EXHIBITION
	Palestrina	Ransom	Georges Braque
overview	The British stage premiere of Hans Pfitzner's 1917 opera about art and its responsibilities produced by Nikolaus Lehnhof, designed by Tobias Hohelsel and conducted by Christian Thielemann.	Mel Gibson and Rene Russo are parents dealing and double-dealing with their son's kidnapper in a Richard Price's tautly plotted thriller directed by Ron Howard who gave us <i>Cocoon</i> and <i>Apollo 13</i> .	45 paintings from the last 20 years (he died in 1963) of Georges Braque who still languishes in the shadow of fellow cubist Picasso. Still lives, interiors and a series of paintings of the artist's studio.
critical view	Bayan Northcott took against the thoughtful, "provincial" staging, but "See it by all means". "Spaciously conducted ... its flaws are fascinating," nodded the <i>Guardian</i> . "The Royal Opera has done <i>Palestrina</i> proud: see it, once," declared the <i>Times</i> . "A noble effort," concluded the <i>FT</i> . "Does Covent Garden such artistic credit," saluted the <i>Telegraph</i> .	Ryan Gilbey was impressed by "the first Ron Howard movie to haunt rather than desert the mind". "A sustained twister of surprises... You're sent away shaken and stirred," purred the <i>Standard</i> . "A finely toiled suspense thriller," declared the <i>FT</i> . "Overwrought but riveting," conceded <i>Time Out</i> . "Did it have to be so long, so uneven," queried the <i>Times</i> ?	Andrew Graham-Dixon was moved. "A life lived around some mysterious absence coalesces into an entirely serious and melancholic image." "To be contemplated in the meditative calm with which they were painted," praised the <i>Spectator</i> . "Immensely rewarding and, at times, revelatory," sang the <i>Times</i> . "A wretched little exhibition," sneered the <i>Standard</i> .
on view	Ton't, 6, 10, 15 & 19 Feb at ROH, Covent Garden (0171-304 4000)	Cert 15, 121 mins, on every conceivable cinema screen.	Royal Academy, London W1 (0171-439 7438) to 6 April.
our view	Four and a half hours: musically rewarding, dramatically absurd. For enthusiasts only.	Surprisingly watchable.	Supremely wistful, a study in persistence, tinged by sad retrospection.

KEY

EXCELLENT

GOOD

OK

POOR

DEADLY

The Birmingham ghost

Duncan Fallowell goes in search of a traveller who covered his tracks

With Chatwin: portrait of a writer by Susannah Clapp, Cape, £15.99

This memoir of the legendary travel writer Bruce Chatwin, who died in 1989, is cleverly organised by theme ("Objects", "Exotica", "Nomads"), and yet a broad chronology is helpfully preserved. The first thing one notices is that the author is in love with her subject – physically in love. The opening pages drool and flutter in an extended description of Chatwin's body and clothes. This fetishism continues at various levels throughout the book, which is more about things than ideas, feelings or relationships.

The life is displaced into an externalisation of febrile materialism: shopping, eating, interior decoration, locations, and Chatwin's face. In this, Susannah Clapp is only following the man for whom every object had to be a statement, every person useful for myth-making. "The meals that he arranged himself were minutely considered," she writes; and "In the flesh he could seem reticent, and people found him awkward to hug". The resulting story has something cold, humourless and creepily unhealthy about it, which is its essential fascination.

Not unexpectedly, Chatwin's first career was with Sotheby's, the greatest river of "things" on the planet. In his books, too, he was a collector, of honed impressions and observations. He was bad at structure and his books were put together with considerable help from other people. Susannah Clapp was the best of his editors, but he could be passive and accommodating even with informal companions. Thus Kevin Volans, a South African musician, commented that in one piece "there was altogether too much about haemorrhoids, and Bruce immediately took out a sentence or two."

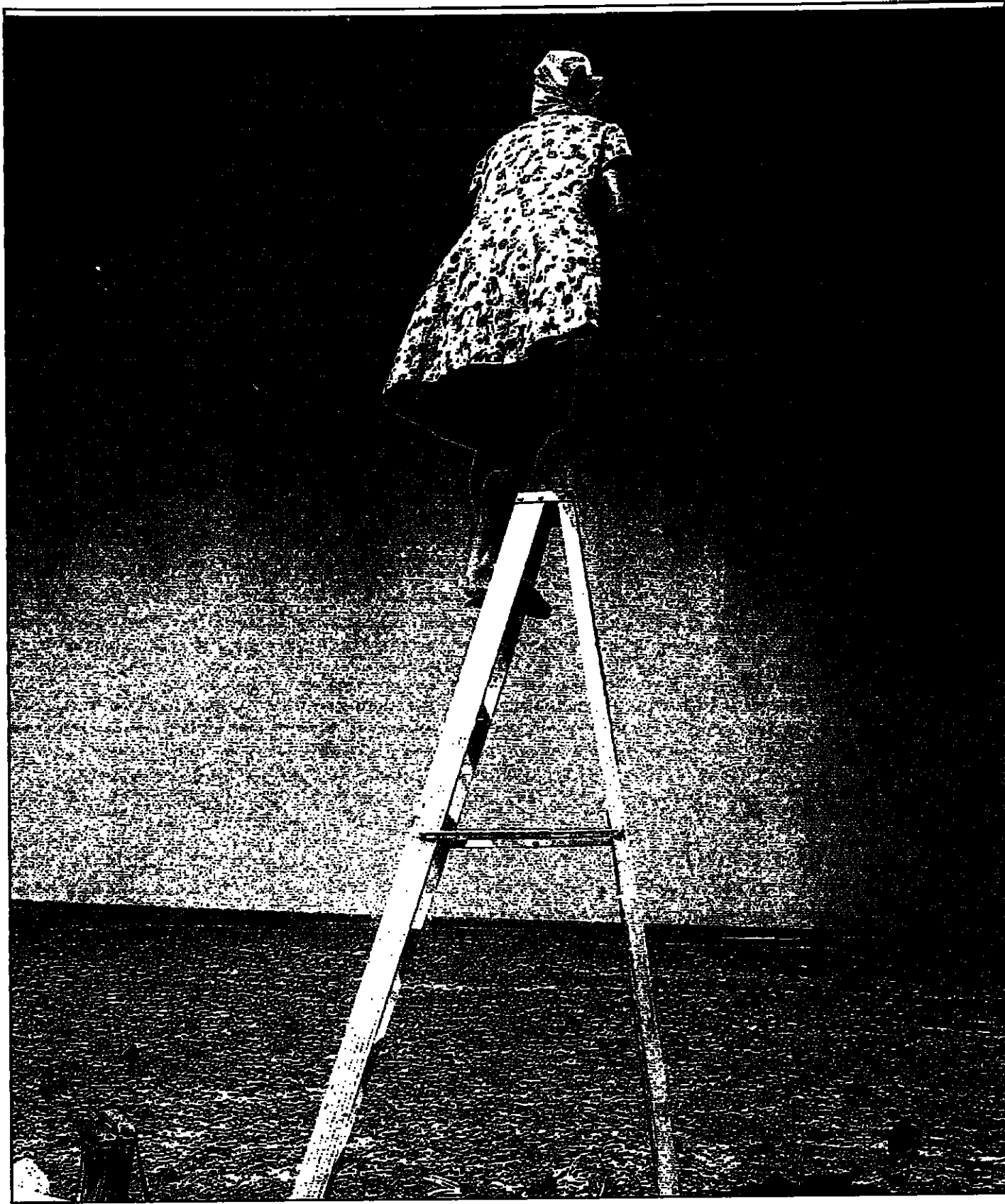
Though Chatwin travelled a great deal, his life is thin on incident for the biographer. It was conducted more or less at one level, that of the wish English *bourgeoisie*. He lived in Belgravia, Mayfair, Oxfordshire; he stayed with the Mellys or Leigh Fermors or Connors; he wrote with a Mont Blanc pen in moleskin notebooks.

Surprisingly, there are almost no significant associations with foreigners. Chatwin was a voyeur in foreign parts, never involved. Clapp evokes well the lifestyle of his circle, though it degenerates here and there into copy for glossy magazines. The over-extended digressions on Francis Wyndham, the 17th-century poet Henry Vaughan, and other ancillary characters are a more blatant form of padding, given the concise nature of the book.

To the lack of any muscular drama in his life (except at the end), Clapp adds her own refusal. There seem to be many people she doesn't wish to offend. The central fact of Chatwin's life – which explains almost everything about him – was his homosexuality. She refers to it on numerous occasions and cites his two most important lovers (Ridley Millington-Drake and Jasper Conran), but never takes on the psychological implications.

In this context, his life's key relationship is not with either of his male lovers or with his wife but with his parents, and this she doesn't mention. They occur, as they must, at his birth, then disappear altogether. Because of their psychological control – of which they may have been unaware – Chatwin remained painfully maladjusted to his inner self, secretive and forever indulging in decoy manoeuvres which included marriage to a "sister" figure called Elizabeth and later, of course, his travelling.

Clapp presents Chatwin as a sort of free-wheeling, mischievous bisexual. Probably that is what he would have loved to have been, but he strikes me as absolutely not of this warm, cavalier Neal Cassidy type. He comes across as far more anx-



Seeking a pattern: Chatwin's picture of an archaeologist who studied Inca earth-lines, from *Photographs and Notebooks* (Cape)

ious and effeminate. As a schoolboy he enjoyed embroidery and won a prize for flower arranging. He was fastidious and took good taste to a degree at which it became another form of vulgarity.

The escape was not only from the parents, but from Birmingham where they lived. Because this escape was a matter of geography, not confrontation, he remained always in thrall to his parents, while Birmingham, the citadel of naif, was ever waiting to re-engage him.

Like Tennessee Williams, Chatwin was famous for his abrupt disappearances. Clapp writes that "He hated being shut in". Claustrophobia and agoraphobia are complementary states from which many writers suffer. The solution is often to become a traveller or a recluse, and to travel where you are not known combines both. This was Chatwin's strategy for survival: for fear of being shut in was fear of scrutiny, which was fear of exposure.

He often wrote beautifully, rarely deeply. His horror of self-revelation prevented that. Apparently, he could converse with animation, but the few quotations here are not more than amusing camp. On his status as a writer Clapp floats dangerously close to fag-hagiography. She is hyping from the first page, on which she asserts that the word "Chatwin" entered the language at the same

time as "Thatcherite". Have you seen the word Chatwinesque before? I haven't. In fact, he reads not so much like a modern writer as a talented throwback to the early postwar world of Denton Welch and J R Ackerley, life-loving but careful and tortured in a very English way.

With Aids, Chatwin's life becomes tragic and contemporary. And no man did Aids suit less – not only was it seen as a grotesque badge of homosexuality, it was somehow "Birmingham" too. He never publicly admitted his condition, concocting a more exotic disease instead. But after his death a number of friends who thought they were close were upset to discover that he felt he couldn't trust even them with the truth. Shame over what one is, especially when sustained to the grave, produces a curious depression in others.

Chatwin was served well by his friends. He clearly had great charisma. As a writer, his effortless glide to centre-stage was adorable, as it always is in art. But in life, it is less so, and Chatwin may well have been among those who saw in Aids a humiliating nemesis for the golden boy. For the first time, he was a loser.

The memoir, like the life, mounts well, then suddenly falls to nothing and dies. The last chapter is weird rather than poignant, with a vivid evoca-

tion of Chatwin's residence at the Ritz, from which he went on wild shopping sprees round the West End by wheelchair.

But at the end, so many questions have been avoided. He died in the South of France. I know that his parents lived part of every year in a caravan down there – why are they not present at this climax? He is dying, of course, at Shirley Conran's house, not far from where they lived. And what did the wife think of her gay and posturing husband? Why did she marry him? Why does she say nothing? Why does Jasper Conran say nothing? Why do so few people want to stand up and be counted? Why are his papers at the Bodleian embargoed until 2010? How for that matter did he contract HIV?

In 1938 Cyril Connolly wrote that "It is no exaggeration to say that every English writer since Byron and Shelley has been hamstrung by respectability and been prevented by snobbery and moral cowardice from attaining his full dimensions... it is the difference between being a good fellow and growing up".

Hardy, Lawrence and Auden prove Connolly wrong. He nonetheless identified a huge problem area for English writers, which the life of Chatwin – and Susannah Clapp's rendition of it – prove is still with us.

A tsar is born again

Robert Service on a sad sage

Invisible Allies by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (translated by Alexis Kilgoff and Michael Nicholson), Harvill, £9.99

In 1962, the USSR was still dazzling us by sending manned rockets into space, and there was concern that the West might lose its contest with the Soviet planned economy. That year, a literary meteor appeared in the form of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Previously, it had seemed that imprisonment and censorship had eradicated independent thought from Soviet culture. Now Solzhenitsyn's novella about a labour camp in the late Stalin period showed this to be incorrect. Courageous, critical spirits had survived in Russia.

Many contemporary readers assumed that Solzhenitsyn was a socialist. Why was this? The most obvious reason was that he initially enjoyed patronage of the regime. What is more, his critique of Stalinism was very understated. He deliberately described a rather "good" day in the life of prisoner Ivan Denisovich. Avoiding extravagant denunciation, he accorded a modicum of sympathy even to the nastier figures. And when the first news about Solzhenitsyn was relayed abroad, it was easy to believe that he was a man rather like Ivan Denisovich: simple, affable and modest.

Peace between the writer and the regime quickly broke down, and Solzhenitsyn was prominent in the dissident movement until, in 1974, he was deported. In this volume of memoirs, first published in Russian six years ago, he recalls his struggle and the dangers he ran. His account of the KGB's incompetent surveillance is a masterpiece of irony. Winter after winter, he vanished into the Estonian countryside – and no secret policemen knew where he was. Meanwhile, his helpers or "invisible allies" were scuttling across Russia to deliver copies of his laboriously typed works into hiding. To this day, copies still lie buried in gardens and woods.

After *Ivan Denisovich* came two epic novels – *The First Circle*, *Cancer Ward* – and his historical treatise *The Gulag Archipelago*. Solzhenitsyn was justly celebrated as a writer of unflinching bravery, and he continued to encourage anti-communist dissent.

Already, however, his behaviour showed a less attractive side. He was

crabby and unforgiving to several of those who had close dealings with him. His brand of Christianity, which he proclaimed as the sole means of regenerating Russia, was distinguished more by its stern sermonising than by compassion. His impatience with criticism was intense. In debate, he was as intolerant as the propagandists of Marxism-Leninism.

His stated purpose in this book is to reveal the names of his secret helpers and express his thanks. But his sense of gratitude is seldom unaccompanied by some carping comment. Here a translator is roundly denounced, there a biographer is said to have misrepresented him. Even his helpers in the USSR, who risked their liberty, are judged sternly. All agreed with him in condemning Lenin's October Revolution; but one or two incautiously voiced approval of the Tsar's removal. Solzhenitsyn writes wittingly of their opinions. As a result, his book is deficient in graciousness and a sense of proportion.

Nowadays, this is also the conclusion drawn about him by most citizens of the Russian Federation. He could have returned to Russia before 1994; first Gorbachev and then Yeltsin invited him. But he would accede only at a time of his own choosing, and grumpily stayed in the US to complete his multi-volume novel on the First World War, the Revolutions of 1917 and the Civil War. When finally he returned to Moscow, he received a rapturous reception which culminated in his address to the Federal Assembly. He was also given a chat-show on TV to promote his ideas on the future of Russia.

Unfortunately, his show involved more monologue than conversation. Predictably this was unattractive to most viewers, who regarded their liberation from communism as involving the freedom to be unscrupulous and unbossed. The feeling grew that he had little understanding of the reasonable aspirations of ordinary Russians and the show was removed. He continues to be bewildered by his fate. Communism was cruel to him; post-communism has been crueler. His latest book gives plenty of unintended clues as to why things turned out this way.

The Nature of Blood

Caryl Phillips

'A carefully crafted work, shifting seamlessly between past and present, and between different cultures... It is his boldest work to date, for a larger part of its boldness has to do with its artistry, the wonderfully measured pace of its unfolding. Phillips is a storyteller of considerable talent.' *The Times*

Caryl Phillips will be reading from *The Nature of Blood* in:

Cambridge	London
7pm 6 February	7.30pm 12 February
Waterstone's, 6 Bridge Street	Purcell Room, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank
Leeds	Manchester
6pm 11 February	7pm 13 February
West Yorkshire Playhouse,	Waterstone's, 91 Deansgate
Playhouse Square, Quarry Hill	



Understand a little more

Philip Pullman praises a brave study of the Bulger case and its impact

As If by Blake Morrison, Granta, £14.99

One day at the zoo I was admiring the gibbons, with their playfulness and charm, when a startling flew down and landed just outside their cage. At once a long arm shot out and seized it. People gasped and cried out in alarm, and then in horror, as the ape tried to pull the terrified bird through the bars.

It finally succeeded and, beating off the other gibbons, it took the startling to a clear branch and began to pull it to pieces. I can't forget the crackings and snappings, the tough white sinews, the lolling shrieking head, and most of all the curious innocent concentration of the ape.

Because, of course, the ape was innocent. It couldn't reflect on what it was doing. And if there's a spectrum running from innocence to guilt – a spectrum marked by increasing consciousness and ability to reflect – then right at the other end of it there are the likes of Frederick and Rosemary West, who could do so.

Somewhere in between are the little killers of James Bulger. Were they truly evil, or didn't they know what they were doing? Where should we

place them?

Because knowing where to place them means knowing how to judge them. Blake Morrison's troubling study of the Bulger case is profoundly concerned with these questions, and shows how difficult it is to come by any answers.

Morrison attended the trial of Robert Thompson and Jon Venables in 1993. He stayed in Preston (where the boys' trial was held) for a month, walked the route the children took on that dreadful day on Merseyside, heard the tapes of their interrogation ("Please God, never let me hear a child cry like that again. Or rather, let those who think these boys inhuman hear their all-too-human distress"), meditated on his own children and his fears for them, tried to understand.

The book echoes with references to *Macbeth*, and that most murder-haunted play is apt. Hardly anywhere else in literature can we learn so vividly and horribly what it is like to be a murderer, to kill and to know fully what it is that we have done.

It's not certain that Robert Thompson and Jon Venables did know, fully, and that is part of the

point. Morrison is clear that putting them on trial as if they were adults was grossly inappropriate: "Childhood is a separate place... You can't look up for life those whose lives have barely begun."

On the other hand, what they did was horrible, and it's right to lock them up for it. But again, the question of whether they could have known won't go away. "To know, and yet not know – the condition of being ten."

Morrison is very good on the appearance of things. So many of our most powerful judgements are made because of what things look like. Would Michael Howard have been able to declare that Myra Hindley should spend all her life in prison, as he did recently, without the continuing presence of that particular brutal-blond photograph to fuel the public's loathing for her?

Part of our horror at the Bulger case is due to the video clip of the trusting toddler walking away hand-in-hand with his murderer. In this age, we can't escape these visual presences, so we must learn to read them.

Morrison brilliantly describes the

look of the bleak streets and housing estates the children walked through on their way to the railway line, and is wise enough not to refrain from comment. "It must have an effect," he says; and yes, it must.

Similarly, he characterises both the appearance of the two boys and his own reactions to it, and then quotes *Macbeth* once more to warn himself against making judgements based on the look of things. But we must judge, because we are human, and because we are adult and responsible we must beware of the fallibility of our own judgements; but still, we must judge.

At one point I thought the book faltered. Morrison is describing himself putting his little daughter to bed, and he misleads us into thinking that we're reading a scene of seduction. I thought that I could see what he was doing with that story, but it's not the Bulger story.

There was no sexual motive in the killing, or if there was, it was never clearly established. At a first reading, this passage seemed like an error of judgement.

However, I've changed my mind.

By making us complicit in a misreading, he's showing us the importance of appearances once more, and always the need to reflect, to be fully conscious.

Which leads to another presence in this book, that of the words of John Major. His statement that "We must condemn a little more, and understand a little less" is the most wicked thing any British politician has said in my lifetime. It is worse by far than Margaret Thatcher's assertion that "There is no such thing as society", which is transparent bluster by comparison.

Of course we mustn't understand less. We can't go back to being children, back to the innocence of the ape. We must go forward into deeper knowledge, painful though that is.

Morrison's honest, courageous and subtle study is an addition to our understanding, not least because it never overlooks the suffering of little James and his family. The ape's innocence made no difference to the startling.

Philip Pullman won the Carnegie Medal for children's literature last year with the novel *"His Dark Materials"* (Penguin/Scholastic)

A blast of Jacobson's Organ

John Lloyd sizes up a theory of comedy that stretches its point

Seriously Funny: from the ridiculous to the sublime by Howard Jacobson, Viking, £20

This is a rich but indigestible *bouillabaisse* of a book; a prodigious mix of the whole canon of western thought about comedy from Aristophanes, Rabelais, Baudelaire, Jung, Freud and Bergson at one end to Bernard Manning, Jo Brand, Roy "Chubby" Brown and Les Patterson at the other. So who am I, a simple joke-herd toiling at the Mount of Bortoms, to say that after all that research the author doesn't know what he's talking about? Either that, or he does know but has no intention of sharing it with us, viz. "Comedy is invariably on the side of plenitude; it is expansionist not reductive; it knows that less means less and only more means more". Any the wiser? Nor me.

Howard Jacobson has his moments, with interesting things to say and vivid ways of saying them; but too often he's tempted to be, like Jonathan Miller, "too clever by three-quarters". The list of names above gives you a pretty good idea of how the book works. Either it's expatiating on the theories of discredited old misery-guts like Bergson and Freud or it's ankle-deep in knob-gags. There are no half-measures. The often impenetrable prose is lavishly larded with erudition, like smarties on a child's cake. I nodded off a few times, only to be jolted awake by another of Jacobson's huge range of false penises staring me in the face. Like a Dutch girl I know, forced to take the traditional stroll through Amsterdam the night before her wedding with a dildo strapped to her forehead, Jacobson too has de penis on de brain.

He claims that "The entire experience of theatre-going, for the Greeks, was phallus-centred." Just as you're beginning to wonder whether that might not be a bit of an exaggeration, he whips out a vase displaying a satyr balancing a wine-jug on his knob and then he's off: "If that makes satyr the earliest comedian, later comedians have not failed to learn from him. Herakles has his club. Harlequin his batte. Grimaldi his stove-poker. Punch his universal cudgel. The jester his marotte and bladder. Ken Dodd's tickling stick is clearly in the ithyphallic tradition."

I love that "clearly". Clear is what it is not: less than one reader in *cent mille* knows what ithyphallic means. Patronising it is, *bien sûr*, and also *cojones*. Occam's razor of two alternatives, choose the simplest. A tickling stick is what it says it is, a stick which offers the threat or promise of being tickled. Up yer undercarriage, missus, to be sure; but that doesn't stop it being a feather duster.

If there is even a hint of a sentiment being holding something in its paw, from Sooty to a statue of Queen Victoria, then to Jacobson it's a cock. Now, it was I who once convinced the Controller of BBC2 to broadcast the *Cunnilingus Song*. Genitals tickle me as much as the next man. But this is commitment of a different order. After 85 pages of knobs and arses, Hopi Indians lobbing shit at each other, satyrs balancing amphorae on stiffs and Scandinavian deities plaiting their pubic regions to goats' beards, I thought: "Is this guy getting enough?"

I looked him up on the fly-leaf. Goat-looking feller. Beard. Priapic proboscis; shaggy-out looking eye.



Death and the Fool from Thomas Rowlandson's *The English Dance of Death* (1815)

Then I had my *Britannica* CD Rom search for "jacobson". The very first entry it threw up was: "Jacobson's Organ: region of chemically sensitive nerve endings in the oral cavity (my italics) of many vertebrate animals. Jacobson's organ is most strongly present in snakes." This richly phallic passage is more than just a striking coincidence. It is an explanation. What do you expect? Jacobson's Organ is more famous than he is.

There's another odd thing about this book. Like that new novel by Sean French and Nicci Gerrard, it seems to be written by two people. One is the Jacobson who was "born in Manchester in 1942"; the other the Jacobson who "studied English under F R Leavis". The Mancunian is responsible for most of the best bits. He has a lively, expressive style. He makes jokes, is painfully honest, and has the advantage that he writes almost exclusively in English.

The Leavisite, I suspect, may not be a person at all but some form of software. He's a Eurothesaurus, perhaps, with a simultaneous translator function and a bizarre taste for Zuni and Hopi pueblo clowns who drink urine and chuck poo at each other.

The first bloke is a nervous, touchy individual with a larger than usual personal space, frightened of clowns, spiders and teenagers, who lurches alarmingly between weeping and contempt. He's like some anatomical diagram of a person, all his

insides spread out to view. His academic *alter ego* is altogether more dispassionate. And very well read. I suppose we all ought to know what an apophthegm is, but anhedonic, evaginations, agelast?

Anyway, one Jacobson sets off round the world to find out why people laugh for the accompanying Channel 4 series. He doesn't have much fun. People jostle him. They have pustules. They smell of vinegar. He is nearly thumped by a Navajo Indian; a Venetian harlequin tries to pull off his nose at the Carnival.

Meanwhile, the other Jacobson tours fifth-century BC Athens, the *Commedia dell'Arte*, the Middle Ages etc. meeting only poets, psychologists and philosophers. They neither jostle nor smell. They opine. The trouble is that citing learned authority has never been any guarantee of truth. No-one's right about everything. Take Aristotle. How seriously can we take his assurances on comedy, when he also assures us that the universe revolves around the earth? Quoting Bergson's line that "the attitudes, gestures and movements of the body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine" is to be expected. But did no-one laugh before the invention of machinery?

In the contest for the best lines, the comics beat the philosophers hands down. Bernard Manning, for instance: "They say you are what you

eat - I'm a cunt". It's a great joke, if you like that sort of thing, but Jacobson's comment? "Good to be reminded that there's a bit of a gourmand and a bit of a pig in all of us".

A bit of a gourmand? If you ever have the misfortune, as I once did, to watch Bernard Manning eating a sandwich, Hopi shit-throwing ceremonies will hold no terrors for you. What's funny about such jokes is not that they are rude or "remind us of our animality" - that's incidental - but that they're clever. They make completely unexpected, but logical connections between disconnected things. The other reason Manning gets the laugh is because it's true. He is a cunt, he knows it, and we know it. He no more reminds anyone of themselves than a pile of rotting antelope flesh resembles a clarinet.

It is not animality, or mortality or all that stuff we feel when offered a good joke. It is delight: delight at the unexpectedness, the neatness, the logic of the uncoupling of the mind from one train of thought to another. But what's Jacobson getting at under his mound of arses? Here's the nub: "If comedy, in all its changing shapes, has one overriding pre-occupation, it is... that we resemble beasts more closely than we resemble gods, and we make great fools of ourselves the moment we forget it". He enlists Bergson: "Laughter cannot be absolutely just. Nor should it be kindhearted either. Its function

is to intimidate by humiliating."

I'd guess this book comes from a man without children. No-one who lives with a one-year-old, whose gurgling hilarity clearly comes from nothing more sinister than the sheer merriment of being alive, of being able to walk, of having a mummy who loves you, could have written it. The comedy of cruelty is only one kind of comedy. Plenty of funny things have nothing to do with the body's mortality or phalluses.

It seems to me that Howard Jacobson's view is so one-sided precisely because he lacks a sense of being alive. He won't join in. Anything pagan, remote, foreign or ancient, no matter how gross or stinky, is "exuberant". But let him go to Blackpool pier and he is moaning about the weather, the tea, the hotel and the "shit in the shops, shit on the beach, shit in the amusement arcades". Pueblo shit, oh, mahvelous. Shit shit, he don't like.

Touchnigly, he says as much himself. After the horrible experience in Venice, he staggers back depressed to a café: "How vitalizing carnival looks on the printed page. How irresistible in all its communal contortions... As long as you never have to leave the house". Despite it all, I felt quite sorry for the guy.

John Lloyd is a comedy producer who started *The News Quiz*, *Not The Nine O'Clock News*, *Spitting Image* and *Blackadder*.

Computer malfunctions

Frances Fyfield switches off

Stalking Fiona by Nigel Williams, Granta, £15.99

Enter the alternative heroine, on big feet. Fiona is a lonely girl secretary with an ugly flat and undecided life. There was once a man called Dave but she got rid of him. Her closest relationship of any kind is with her mum, a grey specimen of parenthood who never opens her mouth except to state the irritatingly obvious ("Oh, you're in, are you?") - a style of dialogue which is obviously infectious. The substitute for life as other 23-three year olds might know it is the regime of her office. Here, Fiona is the apparently anonymous focal point for three accountants, Peter, Paul and John. There may be something significant in their apostolic names, but in any event, this is no ordinary set-up. One of the accountants is a psychotic murderer who, complete with marigold gloves and horrible mask, has invaded Fiona's dreary apartment and raped her, leaving her with the immortal threat, (in a heavily disguised voice, of course), "If you tell anyone about this, I will kill you."

There follows the murderer's second attack, in bizarre circumstances, when again it could have been any one of the three. His communications both confess the crime to her and their computers, while pretending to be one of the other suspects at the same time. The bits on disc are in block capitals, to save confusion.

The two innocent accountants, who secretly love Fiona, conspire in separate communications to save her and themselves. Yet they remain equally suspect, since the pall of corruption hangs over the place. One of the accountants is a lecher, the second a victim of childhood trauma and the third a model family man.

Fiona and reader, between them, are supposed to decipher which one is guilty from her first person-recollection, via a diary and narrative, and from theirs, with letters, discs and so on.

In the meantime, Fiona is safer than she might be anywhere else for as long as she is with two out of the three suspects - unless they are all in together.

Three voices, all in the first

person, with scarcely a shift in tone or style, make this novel a monochrome nightmare to read. There are the conventional fantasies of the culprit, which could have been learned from under-the-counter merchandise at any video store. Then there is the prospect that Fiona might be making it all up to add a little titillation to the suspense - although finding much suspense at all is like looking for an envelope when there are none in the house.

It would be a clever conceit to weave a plot around four, anonymous people if there were indeed something distinctive about their voices, and only if we could be made to care about the fate of at least one of them. Frankly, towards the middle of this novel (let alone the end) it was difficult to give a shit whether poor, passive Fiona was impaled on a stake, never mind raped.

If the other three were to spend the rest of life sharing a cell, so much the better, so long as their conversation was not recorded for posterity. Perhaps Williams is being too subtle in failing to realise that first-person reported narrative is notoriously difficult to sustain, especially when diffused between so many narrators. Maybe this is a cult book for pre-dawn Internet freaks, in love with the screen and incapable of other communication. Could it even be a private joke, without a public laugh. Perhaps it is simply, a failed experiment.

There is no obligation on a writer as fine as Nigel Williams can be to define either his genre or his motive. And there is certainly some elegant and lucid prose in this book, which gives it the feeling of a Pinteresque script in the making. But it has all the signs of an author drunk with subject matter, writing in the absence of anyone tapping his shoulder.

That figure at his shoulder should have reminded him that the crime genre, into which this novel inevitably falls, is rich in literary talent these days. Anyone who dabbles in it must at least create genuine sympathy and suspense. Taking the minimalist approach is fine, but not at the risk of clarity or heart.

Independent choice: first novels

By Helen Stevenson

Here's an idea: no more blurbs for first novels. A first novel should be taken like a glass of wine at a blind tasting, saving the blurb for later, just to check if your guesses concerning sex, age, husband's first name, number of domestic animals, and degree of talent estimated by publisher were all correct. Except that a first novelist has talent as sure as wine is wet. Without the word "talent" a blurb is not a blurb; it's an admission.

This is a misleading category in any case. Just as a learner driver may have been on the road for years or simply hours, the first novelist may have a greater or lesser experience of his *medium*. The blurb rarely says that "after 15 failed manuscripts, here is a triumphant debut from X". It might be rather endearing if it did.

Here, though, are four first novels that live up to the expectation of something new, surprising, even genuinely "promising" (though it seems a bit patronising to consider what ought to be a satisfying novel in itself as a mere appetiser for the grand play to come). Only one, Christopher John Farley's *My Favourite War* (Granta, £8.99) has

a specific, contemporary social setting: at the outbreak of the Gulf War. The other three deal with crack-ups, yet all are about people who feel more like themselves at the end than when they first set out. All these novels had weaker endings than they had beginnings; it seems that only old writers with lots of experience are good at endings.

Farley is a 29-year old black journalist. No marks for guessing who his protagonist is (not a Zen potter from Newfoundland). He finds himself sent on assignment, covering the Gulf War, as researcher to a beautiful black columnist on *The Washington Post*. Farley's analysis of the war, of American society, of being black, single and professional, is quick, contemporary and very funny - the jokes are good and frequent, though it's much more than an annotated edition of a *Cleaver Boy's bon mots*. Of an editor who lies about her age: "She was something-something". On being single: "Would I have to, in the end, settle for someone who thought they might be settling for me?"

With *Bless The Thief* (Secker & Warburg, £15.99), Alan Wall has written a very serious, very good

novel. At the same time, it's one of those novels that somehow has the author's own reservations written in invisible ink in the margins. You sense a highly critical author, and many painstaking drafts.

To be fair, Wall pretty much has got it right, through having been exceptionally rigorous with himself. *Bless The Thief* is the story of Tom Lynch and his guardian/headmaster Patrick Grimshaw (a no-good mother in the background further swells the ratios of no-good mothers to no-good fathers in current first novels).

Grimshaw initiates Tom into the secret Delaqua society at Oxford, and Tom becomes its youngest ever secretary. Each member holds the original, never-to-be-reproduced copy of one of the works illustrated by the great, late Delaqua; Dante, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *The Gospel According to St John*, among others.

Tom's breach of the society's code leads to his descent into a Baudelairean world dominated by squalor, drink and loathing. This is an elegant piece of writing, full of things he's not so well expressed, and sentences that glide along



Pick of the week
My Favourite War by Christopher John Farley (Granta, £8.99)

like chipped-glass swans on water, catching the light.

Suspicious River (Faber & Faber, £9.99) is a novel by a poet, Laura Kasishke, whose abundant images do not so much embellish the work as provide a tense rigging that enables it to surge towards its grimly inevitable conclusion. It's a bleak, sumptuous, nasty account of a girl, Leila, whose mother slept with men for love or money, sometimes both. Leila does this too, gulping down the abuse with

a dry mouth.

Sometimes the images don't quite come off: "roses, puffy and soft as pneumonia", for instance. But sometimes she speaks so plainly that it hurts: "He's my height and my length and my body feels safe with his, as if I am desiring myself, as if there's only one of us to please."

Tracey Chevalier's *Virgin Blue* (Penguin, £5.99) has been selected for the WH Smith Fresh Talent promotion, which is such an achievement for a serious female writer that you feel it deserves an award. Her novel is about a young American woman who goes to live in a French village and researches her Huguenot ancestors - and a Mediterranean man.

This is a good read: no clichés in sight, a well-made story with characters who walk and talk just the way people do, halfway between hallucination and public facade. It's almost as enjoyable as *My Favourite War*, though less eye-poppingly well written than *Suspicious River* and *Bless The Thief*. In fact, there's nothing in this batch of novels not to recommend, which goes to show that sometimes, as a cigar is just a cigar, a blurb is just a blurb.

No 2

Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is the 2nd greatest book of the century, as voted for by Waterstone's customers and Channel 4 viewers. To find out which other great works make up the 100 Books of the Century and for an essential guide to 20th century literature, visit any Waterstone's bookshop. If, while you're there, you discover there are some you haven't read, from now until the end of February you can buy any four titles from the list for the price of three. For an indication of where you might like to start, try the thoughts of Germaine Greer reviewing the list in "W" magazine, available in all Waterstone's shops, priced £1.

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A week in books

Political insiders who write novels about great affairs of state almost always get it embarrassingly wrong. Not the facts or the folklore, but the tone - the edgy, tart, sardonic air that blows through all the corridors of power, but which the Dobbses and the Curries clumsily distill into a knowing sixth-form cynicism. Read Joe Klein's *Primary Colors* - an ocean ahead of its British rivals - for proof of just how high the political novel can climb. Back in the land of tabloid title-tattle, truth beats fiction any day. A single page of Alan Clark's *Diaries* delivers a clearer view of the private springs of public life than a whole shelf of dire parliamentary potboilers.

Yet here comes heavy-footed Michael Dobbs again. Between them, his star Ian Richardson and his adapter Andrew Davies dragged Dobbs's Francis Urquhart trilogy way above its literary station. Some similarly gifted TV team should do the same with *Goodfellowe MP* (HarperCollins, £16.99) to wipe out the memory of just how dull this novel is. Thomas Goodfellowe, its crumpled crusader, is a backbench "piece of parliamentary fotsam" with a wrecked family and a glorious future behind him. In a less than thrilling intrigue, he ventures out from his Soho eyrie to bust a Buchananese industrial cartel which plans (with help from a crudely caricatured Maxwellian magnate) to seize control of British newspapers. The only laugh in this perfunctory plot, decked out in dreary Archer-level prose, comes from the notion that EU legislation might force our upstanding breed of media barons to sell their titles to a bunch of spivs. Remind me, now: who is it that controls HarperCollins?

In contrast, Michael Toner's *Seeing the Light* (Simon & Schuster, £15.99) manages a few half-decent thrills and some nice touches of sulphurous wit. Toner (a former *Express* lobby correspondent) creates a Tory minister compelled to do good by three glimpses of heaven and hell.

The sudden conversion to virtue - and the havoc it wreaks - has a fine satirical pedigree (Toner calls his would-be saint George Gulliver). Unexpectedly, though, those parts of the book that stray furthest from political shenanigans impress the most. Toner's efforts to enter the head of "a 20th-century Englishman sunk in medieval dread" work surprisingly well, especially when Gulliver sets off on a sacrificial quest into the Sahara. Meanwhile, the usual Westminster imbroglio - with its sleazy hacks and back-stabbing MPs - raises only faint smiles. For blood and guts, the actual Tory leadership contest of 1990 outstripped the one Toner invents. Still, I did enjoy the idea of the Almighty materialising to Gulliver as a pukka gen in a Garrick Club. As he explains, "You need metaphors, George". So do we all - including a few of the plodding literalists who walk the parliamentary fiction beat.

Boyd Tonkin

More butterfly than bee

Laura Thompson finds that a memoir of The Greatest pulls its punches

The Tao of Muhammad Ali by Davis Miller, Vintage, £7.99

What is a hero? One possible definition is that your hero is yourself turned outwards. The particular quality of courage, chutzpah, genius that you feel lies within is, in the hero, not just reflected but opened. What is hidden in you is sunlit in them.

Certainly this is how Davis Miller feels about Muhammad Ali. Throughout Miller's life, Ali has been his sunlit self, the self whose pallid skin gleams with "pecan beauty", whose desire to communicate with people is simplified into huge and virile gestures, whose triumphs and sufferings become transcendent. This is the relationship that Miller's book attempts to convey.

The book also tells the story of the actual friendship that developed between hero and worshipper. During the 1980s, Miller and his family lived near Ali's mother; one day, he knocks on Mrs Clay's door. The three chapters that follow - which describe the tentative bond between Miller and Ali, and the shambling, yet still-powerful figure that is the Ali of today - are by far the best in the book. One passage has Miller and Ali sparring in Mrs Clay's backyard: "I instinctively block and/or slide to the side of all three of Ali's punches and immediately feel guilty about it, like being 14 years old and knowing for the first time that you can beat your Dad at ping-pong."

The joke is still on Miller, however. Later, Ali shadow boxes around his mother's sitting room and creates the illusion that "he can still make fire appear in the air...I'd honestly thought that what he'd thrown in the yard was indicative of what he had left. But what he'd done was allow me to play; he'd wanted me to enjoy myself."

Miller returns to this idea that Muhammad Ali's greatest gift was - and remains - an ability to liberate the playfulness, the joyful child, in his audience. It is a terrific insight, convincingly conveyed. Far more often, however, Miller's subject eludes his authorial control. He



Muhammad Ali takes the world heavyweight title from Sonny Liston in 1964

ALLSPORT

is rightly insistent on the autonomy of Ali, recognising that even the "most famous man in the world" still has a life of his own that resists analysis. In a sense, that is the message of his book.

It is, however, a message that comes across in ways that Miller perhaps did not intend. His worshipful rendering of Ali, of every detail of his clothing, conversation and behaviour, surely did not wish so often to give the impression of a spoilt show-off, childishly obsessed with the power of his own legend.

The problem is that, however much Miller may insist on his desire to reveal that there is more to

Muhammad Ali than the myth, the appeal of his book relies almost completely upon the fact of that myth. Within every page lies the belief that Muhammad Ali is The Greatest. Quite simply, those who do not subscribe to that belief will not subscribe to this book.

There is another problem with *The Tao of Muhammad Ali*, but this is not the fault of its author. One cannot blame Davis Miller for the fact that there have been, over the past five years or so, too many books published about sport, about Ali, and about the personal connection that writers feel with their subject. Nor is it his fault that,

thanks to over-exposure in trendy men's magazines, his style has become something of a cliché. One knows too well that scene in the tattered boxing gym, where the writer inhales the liniment and metamorphoses into Norman Mailer; too well, also, the scene which describes the death of a parent. One cannot doubt its sincerity, but this honesty reveals nothing but itself.

Yet this is a likeable book, occasionally penetrating, occasionally moving. That it would have had more power, had it been published ten years ago, is a rather sad indictment of the even greater power of literary fashion.

Skirmishing in Spain on an unsentimental journey

Penelope Lively enjoys a master craftsman's despatches from the battlefield of life

Blame Hitler by Julian Rathbone, Gollancz, £15.99

Julian Rathbone is the author of 24 novels, of which a mere three are in print in paperback; probably his name is familiar only to those who base their reading on the public libraries. This is regrettable, because he is a writer of great flexibility, moving easily from the historical novel through thrillers to the sort of contemporary fiction with psychological overtones that we have here. *Blame Hitler* is a demonstration of that professionalism which is invisible until you stand back and unravel exactly what has been done.

Students of creative writing could take on the theme as a challenge. Within 287 pages and a nar-

rative time-span of around a fortnight, serve up convincing portraits of two families, one contemporary, one in the 1930s, evoke the atmosphere of a family holiday, blend in significant references to the Peninsula War and the Libyan campaign and underpin the whole with a meaningful correlation between private life and public events.

Thomas Somers is pushing 60, married to a woman nearly 20 years younger and with children of ten and 14. The four of them are on a motoring holiday in France: an unstructured affair which is to take them to stay with friends in the south and then possibly on into

Spain, pandering to Thomas's obsession with the Peninsula War. Throughout the trip, he drifts from the reality of family, friends and the scenes of the itinerant holiday to his internal wanderings, based on the edition of Wellington's despatches which he is reading (edited by Julian Rathbone, quotations duly acknowledged) and, even more significantly, his disturbed reflections about his childhood. Within days Thomas will reach the age at which his father died; he finds this prospect deeply unsettling.

Intimations of malign fate crop up from the start, with mounting gravity. First there are just the stan-

dard mishaps of car keys apparently lost, the cap of the petrol tank left on the car roof, the near accident that leaves everyone shaken out of holiday complacency. Thomas gets a bout of flu. More sinister - he has rectal bleeding. Thomas's bowel movements become a central matter of the narrative.

My own reservations about Thomas are not that we have to spend an awful lot of time in the lavatory with him, but concern his personality. He comes across as distinctly unappealing and I'm not sure that this is the author's intention. He is obsessive in every way - about his father, about the war,

about sex. He is panicked by that looming climacteric - 60. The anxious sexual fanaticism lands him in trouble when he allows himself to believe that a young hippy who picks him up is seduced by his ageing charms. He is far more tolerable when mulling over the memories of his parents, which weave into the contemporary narrative and turn it into something more than a brisk account of a meander through France and into Spain.

Thomas's father was a victim of history, his life "stained" by an event during his war service in the western desert. But before that, he was betrayed by the social and economic climate: an Oxford graduate

never able to earn a decent living, a man trapped by class and assumptions. Thomas is haunted by the conviction that his father was a better man than he is and also by a kind of grim rivalry. The final section takes Thomas off on his own into Spain, allowing for a deftly appreciative account of a bullfight and some convincing drunken hallucinations of the Peninsula campaign. And even if the end seems an anti-climax, this is a shrewd and intricate narrative by a skilful novelist, admirably deft in its shifts from the inconsequential dalliance of the family holiday to the immediacies of childhood memory and battlefield experience.

Audiobooks



Annie Proulx's laconic writing is even better heard than read. Newfoundland eccentricities and the "four women in every man's heart" come through sharp as ice in *The Shipping News* (Simon & Schuster, 4.5 hrs, £11.99), though its abridgement may lose newcomers a little sympathy for its outwardly fleshy, inwardly soulful hero, and Robert Joy's voice occasionally flattens out. Critics wavered when dealt *Accordance Crimes* (S&S, 5 hrs, £11.99), Proulx's sensual serial portrait of the immigrants that make up America. But its episodic form works well on audio, and Edward Hermann's reading is brilliantly sustained.

Christina Hardyment

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Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst, Lucasta Miller and Boyd Tonkin

CivilWarLand in Bad Decline by George Saunders (Vintage, £5.99) Set in a dystopian future - though, being America, it could even be the present - this darkly satirical collection of six short stories and a novella explores the common theme of false reality. We are plunged into the hallucinogenic world of artificial memories and gimcrack theme parks, where the sleazy *CivilWarLand* of the title story. This shifting territory has been well explored by writers from Michael Moorcock to Ray Bradbury and in a host of science fiction films, but Saunders has an original voice and his insidious, twisted yarns lodge in your mind like illicit dreams.

Storms of Silence by Joe Simpson (Vintage, £7.99) After two acclaimed mountaineering books, there is a sense of peak-fatigue in this work which yokes together high-altitude jaunts in Nepal and Peru. Simpson's particular shick is being a tough-but-tender sort of guy, whether facing up to a drunk in Sheffield or slogging across alpine scree. But his moral

qualms ("mountaineers are simply credit card adventurers") are undermined by self-dramatisation. He certainly can write, though he has trouble ordering his material. Seeing the site of a natural disaster in Peru prompts an inappropriate seven-page memoir about a teenage visit to Belsen.

Selected Letters by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (Penguin Classics, £9.99) From passionate youth "Ay, Ay, as you say my Dear, Men are vile Inconstant Toads" to wise old age, Lady Mary is one of the most entertaining of all English letter writers. The famous set-pieces are here, such as descriptions of a female invasion of the House of Lords ("The Duchess of Queensbury...pushed at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer") and a Turkish bath in Sofia ("I excused my selfe [by] opening my skirt and shewing them my stays"), alongside the fervent fusillade prompted by a mid-life infatuation with an Italian intellectual. Beautifully edited, these epistles glitter with wit and vitality.

The French by Theodore Zeldin (Harvill, £7.99) This lengthy, amiable dissection of our mysterious, distrusted and envied neighbours has been constantly in print for 17 years. Most of its findings remain spot-on, though Zeldin's 1983 statement that she "is now less demanding" has not proved to be the case. The 30 or so themes in the book are usually approached via profiles of individuals, which Zeldin fascinatingly expands: did you know that the French imported both kissing and handshaking from England? France becomes a more enjoyable and intelligible place to visit after reading this book, but the opaque cartoons serve as a reminder of the unbridgeable gulf between us.

Keeper of Genesis by Robert Barval and Graham Hancock (Mandarin, £6.99) In their first collaborative effort, these best-selling explorers of the arcane tackle the riddle of the Sphinx, which is usually dated to 2,500BC. They suggest that it has been re-carved from a figure

dating back to 10,500 BC. Together with the Great Pyramids, it may form an astronomical diagram from this time. The authors' speculations, based on the phenomenal engineering prowess of the ancient Egyptians, make irresistibly enthralling reading. Sadly, the book is marred by silly, strident language: "the time has come to seek the buried treasure of our forgotten genesis and destiny". Still, that's what the readers want.

Dared and Done: the marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning by Julia Markus (Bloomsbury, £9.99) Julia Markus believes, quite rightly, that no amount of 20th-century demythologising can erase the romance from the relationship between the Victorian poets Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. Her lively account of their secret courtship in Wimpole Street and subsequent life in Italy has enough in the way of new angles (if not new data) to intrigue. As well as homing in on Elizabeth's drug addiction and gullible

infatuation with spiritualism, she has an original explanation for Mr Barrett's famous refusal to allow his children to marry, linking it to his paranoid fear that the Afro-Caribbean blood in his family might surface in the form of a black grandchild.

The Pope's Rhinoceros by Lawrence Norfolk (Minerva, £7.99) A vast intoxicating binge

of a historical novel, spiced with fine dark comedy and stunning erudition. Mr Baltic hero gets caught up in the decadence and derring-do of the Renaissance papacy, c1500. The Pope craves a rhino, and the quest for the beast allows Norfolk to unleash a cornucopia of sub-plots and digressions. Grass and Eco spring to mind - but so do the mighty red herrings of Sterne.

Story of the Year 5

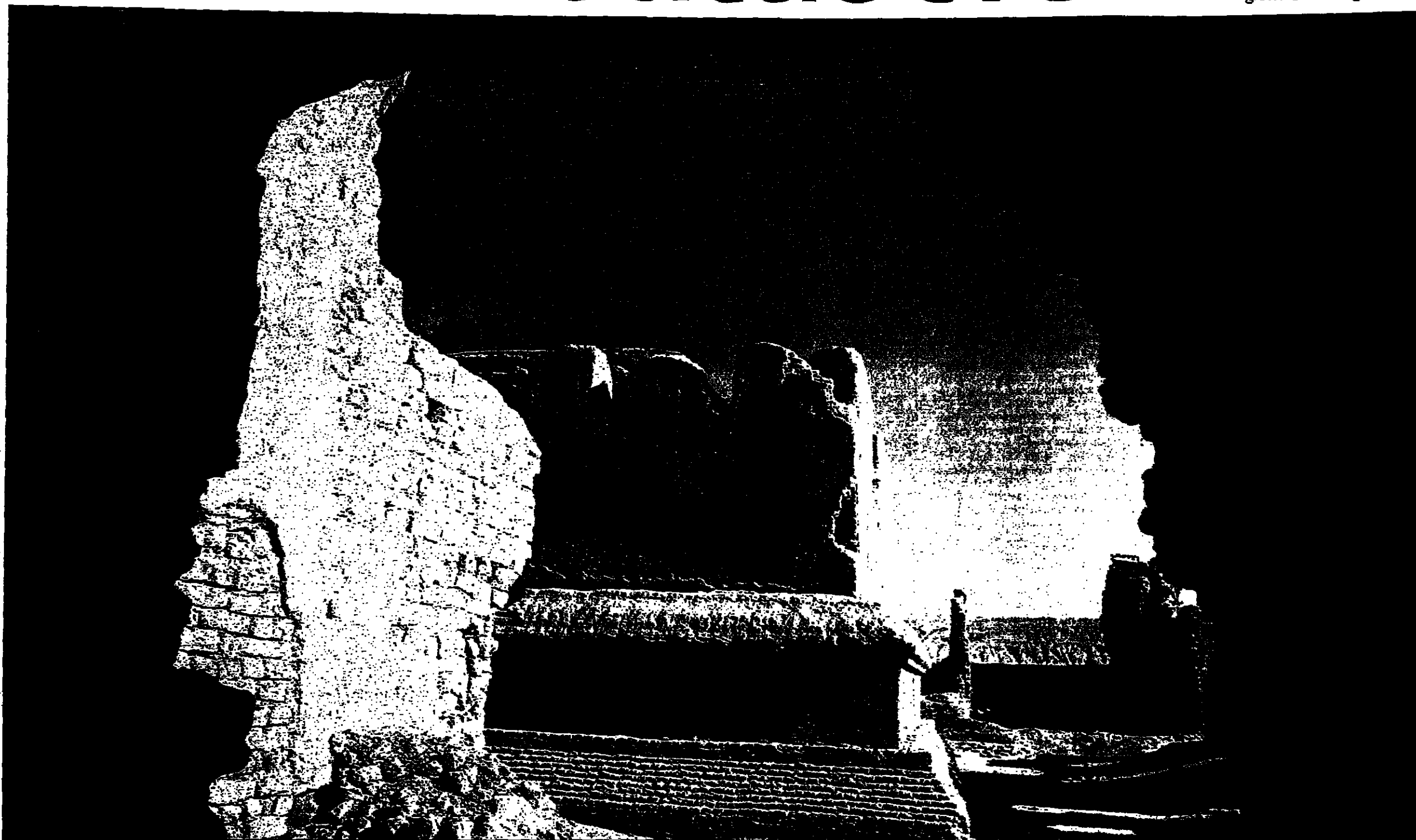
Can you write a winning short story for 6-9 year-old children?

Don't miss The Tabloid next Thursday for details of the 1997 Story of the Year competition. First prize is £2,000, with £500 for the two runners up - and to celebrate the competition's fifth birthday, we will be awarding a special trophy to all three. The

winning story will be published in the *Independent Magazine*, and the top 10 stories will appear in an anthology from Scholastic Children's Books. So sharpen those pencils - and find out on Thursday about the Director of the Albert Hall's bedtime stories.

travel & outdoors

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Standing still in Xinjiang - the Taklamakan Desert bristles with the remains of ruined cities

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN BUCKLEY

Across the treacherous sea of sand

New Year begins in China this week. Martin Buckley celebrates with a Silk Road short-cut

There was a map on the wall behind the reception desk of the Oasis Hotel in Turpan. It showed the vast Taklamakan Desert, with the twin legs of the Silk Road running north and south of it. Joining them together, roughly in the middle, was a black line drawn on with a felt-tip.

"What," I asked the receptionist, "is that line?"

She turned and looked at the map. "It's the new road."

I stared in disbelief. *Taklamakan* means, in the local Uighur language, "You go in but you don't come out". It is a notorious, oven-hot sand sea lying at the western extreme of the Gobi Desert. To think of the Chinese government taking the trouble to construct a road from nowhere to nowhere, across hell itself...

"Why have they built it?" I asked.

She shrugged. She didn't know or care. Outside, the sun was beating down on leafy streets. The oasis of Turpan is one of the delightful surprises of Western China. Its warm climate and pavements lined with cafés and restaurants give you the feeling you are on the Mediterranean rather than in a desert.

Turpan lies on what was once the Silk Road. The ancient trade route is now a tourist attraction, and though foreigners are not exactly flocking to the Takla-

makan, I predict they soon will. At one end of the desert lies Kashgar, the legendary city that was once the centre of Great Game intrigues between the British and Russian empires, and whose magnificent Sunday market is a spectacle that still feels closer to the 19th century than the 20th. At the other end lies Dumbuang, a city with superb Buddhist cave paintings and towering sand-dunes on which you can ride a camel or even paraglide.

Dunhuang is now an established tourist centre, but is as far west as most visitors to China go. Kashgar, 1,000 miles of sand further on, is deep in Central Asia, closer to Tehran or Delhi than Peking.

The oases ringing the Taklamakan have romance, history and - in the right season - a delightful climate. What most do not yet have is tourist infrastructure.

Turpan is an exception. Its range of hotels and eating places sets it apart. It seems to have more *joie de vivre* than other towns, a sense of identity and a relish in being different. What makes Turpan different is the grape, which has been grown here for centuries. Vines have been trained across the main streets to turn them into grape-tunnels. There are tours of the vineyards with their extraordinary underground irrigation tunnels, and even an annual grape festival.

But if you wonder how much of Tur-



Turpan, city of street life and mosques

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN BUCKLEY

pan's jolly street life has to do with the most celebrated grape derivative - wine - you will firmly be told, *nothing*. Turpan is, like all of the central Asian provinces of China, Muslim, and Muslims do not drink alcohol. But this injunction does not

stop the town's pavement cafés from dish-

ing out beer like tap water.

One of Turpan's most famous sites is the Emin mosque, dominated by a remarkable minaret dating from 1777. Made entirely from brick, and covered

with decorative brick patterns, it rises from a massive base and tapers like a minaret. Outside, in the shade of the vine trellises, hawkers recline on straw mats - jumping up to offer chilled watermelon or the carved daggers which seem to be Turpan's main non-viticultural export.

Nearby, the desert bristles with the remains of cities dating from a millennium ago, when the area was Buddhist. The frescoes and statues of Dunhuang were protected because it remained an active centre of Buddhist worship, but the rest of the sites around the Taklamakan were ransacked in the early years of this century. When the outside world heard rumours of an unknown Buddhist culture buried in a remote and barbaric desert region, a manic race began between the world's great museums to be the first to discover the sites.

Explorers such as the Briton Sir Aurel Stein (on whom Indiana Jones is said to be based) and the German Albert von Le Coq launched expeditions that resulted in extraordinary acts of heroism, and numerous deaths. Today, the Chinese feel about the whole episode much the way the Greeks feel about the Elgin marbles. Yet even though the desert cities have been stripped of their statues and murals, they remain mysterious and beautiful.

Not many tourists travel the 20 miles

along an unmade road to the shores of a giant salt lake which lies at the bottom of the Turpan Depression, the lowest point in Asia. As the sun set I walked out across the salt crust, until it cracked, plunging me up to my knees in saline goo. My taxi driver, after his initial alarm, doubled over in laughter, and as we drove back to Turpan my trouser-legs dried into rock-hard pillars of salt.

But what about that alleged road across the Taklamakan Desert? Eventually I found a travel agent who knew about it. The road was not yet complete, he said, but I could definitely cross the desert by it. As for why anyone should have built a road across 300 miles of sand dunes, the reason was a recently-discovered reservoir of wealth lying under the sand: oil.

It was impossible to hire a car without a driver, and the driver I found backed out on the morning we were due to leave, having had second thoughts about crossing a desert that generations before him had every reason to fear.

Next I located a madcap Tibetan whose attitude was so cavalier that I had to persuade him to bring along some spare water for the radiator. This was at dawn the next morning, when we reached an oil-

continued on page 10

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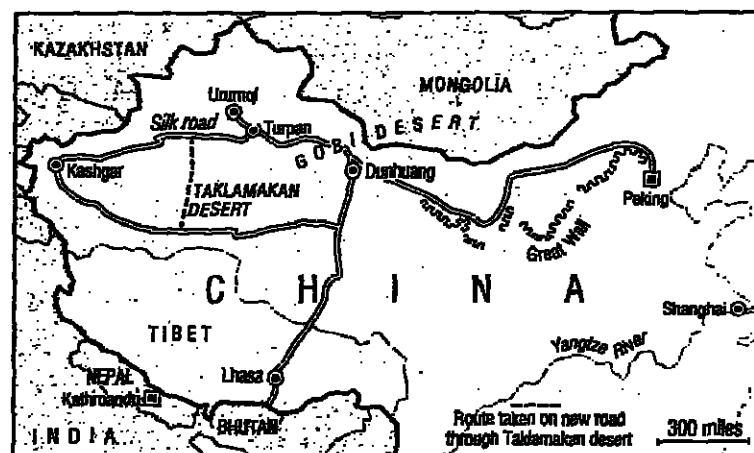
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China in your hands

Desert directions The best times to visit the Taklamakan are spring and autumn. The main city of the region is Urumqi. This is one of the hardest places in the world to reach from Britain, with only infrequent air connections via Almaty, Baku, Islamabad, Moscow or Peking. A round-trip ticket via Peking with an operator such as Silk Steps (0117-940 2800) costs around £650.

Martin Buckley left China from Kashgar to northern Pakistan, via the tortuous mountain pass known as the Karakorum Highway. It's not unknown for travellers with time to spare to fly to Gilgit in Pakistan, cross the Karakorum to Kashgar, and cross back to Pakistan for the return leg. The London Flight Centre (0171-727 4290) can sell you a flight to Islamabad for around £500; the mountain-hopping return flight to Gilgit costs a mere £50. Getting to the rest of China The best fare is on the twice-weekly Air China service (three times each week from April), available for around £475 return through specialist discount agents such as Regent Holidays (0117-921 1711). There may be good offers on indirect routings such as on Swissair



via Zurich - if you don't mind changing planes, phone around. There are some excellent deals for Hong Kong and elsewhere in the region. Quest Worldwide has a fare on Emirates from London or Manchester via Dubai to Hong Kong for around £400 including tax. Bridge The World (0171-911 0900) has a flexible ticket on Gulf Air taking in Bangkok and Singapore as well as Hong Kong for around £500, if you fly out before 14 June.

Red tape British passport holders need a Chinese visa. It is most easily obtained through the China Travel Service, 7 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9DL (0171-836 9911); by post, this agency charges £15 on top of the normal £25 fee for a single-entry tourist visa. Allow a week for processing. *Reading China: a Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £16.99). A new edition of the *Rough Guide to China* (£15.99) will be published in March.

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HOLIDAYS

continued from page 9

refining complex where huge clouds of billowing, orange flame challenged the early morning sun. The only ship was an old caravan, from the back of which a grumpy young woman emerged in her nightdress, rubbing the sleep from her eyes, to sell us a crate of water bottles. We were stopped at an armed police roadblock, but allowed to pass. Then we drove south, into the Taklamakan.

The dunes slowly grew into monsters hundreds of feet high. Hot air rushed in through the open windows, drying our lips to parchment, and making us crave water. Occasionally a road sign pointed to an oil-well invisible in the dunes, or a heavily laden oil-tanker thundered past us.

Romantically, I felt rather gaily to be driving across the desert. This infamous sand sea, one of the world's most wonderful natural phenomena, had been humbled by a strip of tarmac. But as we drove, that feeling was tempered by respect for the men who had built the road. It is a great feat of engineering, crossing shifting sand dunes which have been stabilised by driving a gigantic patchwork of dried grass deep into them. Even so, men and bulldozers labour constantly in terrible heat to keep the invading drifts from closing the road. We passed the camps where they live - tiny huts hundreds of miles from any sign of ordinary human life. It is one of the most arduous existences I have encountered.

My driver's daredevilry turned out to have its limits. At one o'clock we stopped for lunch among some of the highest dunes, and I announced that I was going for a walk. His expression showed that he thought I was mad. I waded into the desert for perhaps a mile, beyond his anxious hooting. At the top of a tall dune I sat and stared west into an ocean of sand. The desert had an untouched, monochromatic beauty. I was alone, at a spot where surely no human being had been before.

Towards evening we reached the unfinished section of the road, and drove 20 miles over dirt track. It was dusk when we reached the southern Silk Road. Here there are remote communities where almost all of the native Uighur men wear their traditional dress - frock coats and tall black fur hats - and the main mode of transport is the donkey cart.

As we drove through the dusk, I wondered how long it would be before the oil industry, television and tourism will drag this unspoiled desert region into the modern age. One thought, however, kept occurring to me: perhaps, one day, the oil will run out and keeping the road open will become prohibitively expensive. And then the tireless desert will reclaim the road across the Taklamakan, just as it has swallowed so many cities in the past.

The slow boat to – Shanghai

Kate Weidmann travelled from Hong Kong aboard a Chinese container ship

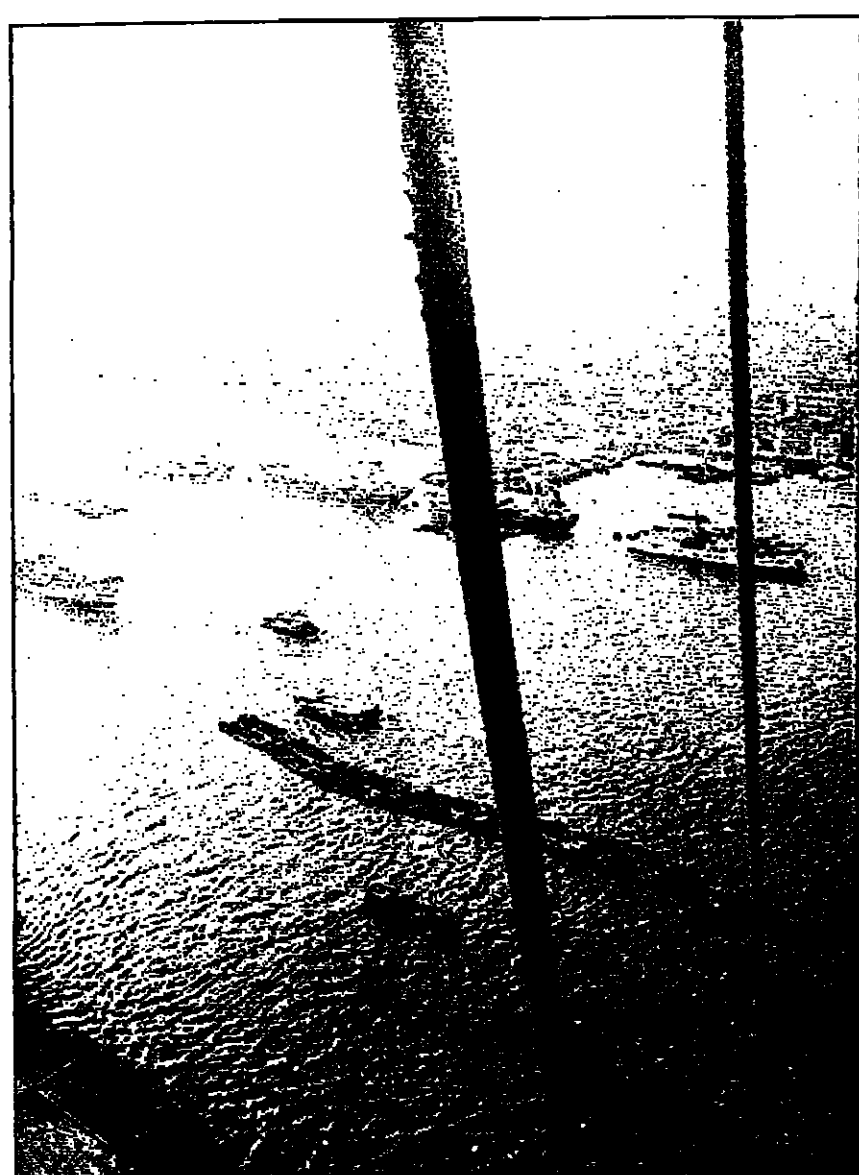
It's the best view you're going to get of Shanghai. The *Hai Hua* arrives at midnight at the mouth of the Huangpu river and anchors for the last-night karaoke party. Small Chinese girls in party frocks come up on stage to dance; the ship's crew do a mixture of stand-up, sword dancing and drag routines that have the Chinese audience in fits of laughter. A highlight of the evening is when the one and only disco track comes on and Westerners clutching their Tsing Tao beers are cheered on to the dance floor - a fit blonde Belgian and an Israeli grandmother dancing gamely to Snoop Doggy Dogg.

Early in the morning the boat puffs up the river, with the gleaming pink Oriental Pearl TV tower soaring on the eastern Pudong bank. The famous row of old colonial banks and customs houses that form the Bund emerge from the morning haze straight ahead.

The *Hai Hua* takes two-and-a-half leisurely days from Hong Kong to Shanghai. Time to sit on the blue-and-white-striped deckchairs and watch the coast of China roll past on the port side of the boat; time to be carried back and forth on the single wave created in the small swimming pool (filled with sea water every day); time to read a large number of paperbacks from the "library" in the mah-jong room. Time to wonder why, with all these hours available, we have to have lunch at 11.20am. Breakfast is at 7.30am, dinner at 5.50pm, as the charming crew relentlessly remind you, tapping at your cabin door and fluting "You come breakfast/lunch/dinner now!"

The boat is part container carrier, part passenger vessel. Accommodation is in shades of the Seventies: yellows, browns, orange and lime green, but clean, with crisp linen and hot showers. The food is Chinese-cancer style, with first-class passengers able to choose two out of three dishes on offer, while *hoi polloi* get one. The small shop sells tea, noodles, sweets, biscuits, canned fruit, cigarettes and writing paper.

Being a good Chinese boat, there is a multi-layered system of privilege and price. Economy class is 16-bed dormitories, third class is six to eight beds, second class divides into B class with four people and A class with two. Spend your money on first class and you get big,



End of the journey: Shanghai's Yangpu Bridge arching over the Huangpu River

comfy chairs, long windows with a good view, and a fridge – a facility one sensible gent made much use of, disappearing after each meal to top up with fine cheeses and wines he had thoughtfully carried aboard. Regardless of class of cabin is the little yellow ribbon attached to your door to denote “foreigner inside”.

You arrive rested, within 20 minutes' walking distance of the Bund and with the crew lined up to wave goodbye while the public address system translates the farewell speech with the closing words "Goodbye, dear passengers, goodbye". Definitely more fun than being just another cipher at the airport.

The latest information we have is that the boat leaves Hong Kong on the 5, 15 and 25 of each month at midday, arriving in the early morning three days later. The return trip from Shanghai leaves at 3pm on 10, 20 and 30 of the month, arriving at midday in Hong Kong three days later. This programme varies seasonally.

Journey costs (as given by China Merchant Shipping, Hong Kong) range from first class A: HK\$1,850 (£154) to third class HK\$850 (£69). Tickets are available from China Travel Service, Central, Hong Kong, or China Merchant Shipping 152-155 Connaught Road, Central, Hong Kong (00 852 2852 7688, fax 2541 1462).

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Michel Buet's feeling for snow

At Les Arcs 1800 you can see foxes and stoats – if you know where to look. By Stephen Wood

Michel Buet, ski-school director at Les Arcs 1800, led me down towards the resort. Then he turned off the piste and we skied across deep snow to a little copse. Here he took off his backpack, pulled out a shovel, and started digging. Ten minutes later he was standing in a hole with his feet on the sod and his shoulders level with the surface of the snow. Why did he do this? Because I asked him to.

Buet runs a course which, as far as he is aware, is the only one of its kind in the Alps. His Ski Nature course (also called, poetically, *l'esprit du renard*, "the spirit of the fox") lasts for one whole day and four half-days, and costs 690 francs (£77). Buet also plans to experiment with shorter versions.

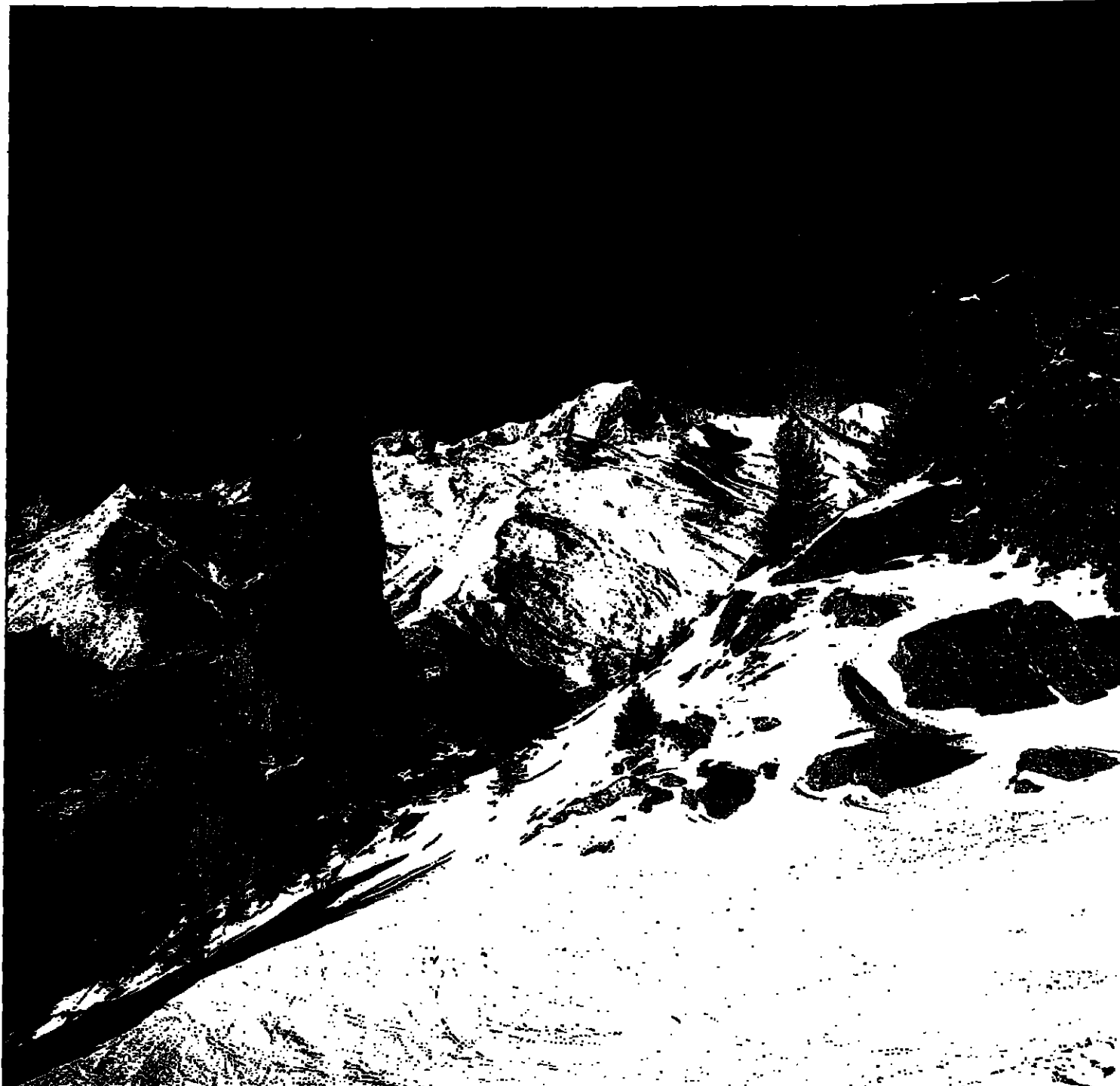
Forget the days you have spent with other ski guides and instructors: on Ski Nature, Buet doesn't lead you down steep couloirs or over blind jumps, or tell you to bend your knees. Rather than exploring your skiing abilities, his course explores the mountain environment. There are sessions on mountain flora and fauna, snow structure, and the natural hazards of the mountains; each one is combined with a little adventure on skis. The full day trip involves a journey on a horse-drawn drag-lift into the Vanoise national park, which abuts the Les Arcs ski area – where, Buet promises, you will see wild chamois and *bouquetins* (stoats).

What led Buet to devise the course was partly, he admits, the limited challenge of being a ski teacher: "Up and down, left and right – I've been doing it for 20 years." More important was the desire to pass on "all the other stuff we learn while training to be a teacher. It's such a waste not to share that knowledge with people who come here to ski." The fact that he has two children heightened his interest in educating skiers on safety.

On a short trip to Les Arcs last month, I didn't have time for the whole Ski Nature course. But Buet, a shy, charming 41-year-old with a sense of humour which keeps trying to burst through his reserve, gave a group of us a half-day sample of it. And we had a terrific morning.

First, there was the unusual pleasure of using skis for the purpose for which they were designed – as a means of transport. In the spirit of the wild fox, which dislikes populated areas, Buet led us away from the pistes on a long traverse through the forest. Picking our way through the trees was not easy: my skis felt about a metre too long for the tight turns. During the frequent rests Buet identified different trees and pointed out animal tracks, mainly those of rabbits and foxes.

Secondly, the valley was transformed from a 30-year-old ski area



On a 'Ski Nature' trip you explore the mountain environment rather than your skiing abilities

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT HARDING

into a patchwork of ancient mountain communities. Buet pointed out the village which 200 years ago had a school for mining apprentices; a bare hillside had had its trees cut down in the late-19th century to make pit props for a salt mine. When he spread out a detailed map on the snow to show us the lie of the land, it struck me what a pitiful thing a piste map is: using it as your guide to the mountain environment is a bit like exploring Paris with only a Metro map. The long traverse through the forest took us to an exquisite early-

18th-century chapel, Notre Dame des Vernettes, built on the site of a spring with miraculous properties. Penitents came on pilgrimages to the chapel from as far away as Tignes, struggling up from the valley; we felt rather smart having travelled down to it on skis, and then being able to traverse back to the nearest ski lift.

Over lunch (if you go to Les Arcs, don't miss Chez Lea in the hamlet of Le Planay) Buet told me about the part of his course where he digs a hole to reveal the structure of the snow. I persuaded him to give me some personal tuition on the way back to Les Arcs 1800.

The walls of his hole revealed the history of this season's snow. The heavy fall from late November was still fairly intact, because the ground temperature had remained constant; a rise in temperature would have degraded the crystals and destroyed the "branches" of its tree-like structure, an effect which can lead to avalanches; subsequent layers of snow tend to slide off the top. But the evidence of two rain show-

ers in early December was clear: two thin sheets of hard ice with a light snowfall sandwiched between them. The skiing surface, 25cm of snow from mid-December, covered up the season's previous history.

Have you ever thought about the hidden depths of the snow beneath your skis? Neither had I. You learn a lot on Michel Buet's Ski Nature course.

For details of Ski Nature, call Erna Low on 0171-584 2841. The course involves intermediate-level skiing.

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Trouble spots

Advice from the Foreign Office (0171-238 4503) on travel within China

Muggings in the main cities, sexual harassment and crimes on trains are increasing, as are thefts on overnight trains and coach journeys. Foreigners are now regular targets.

The Trans-Siberian Railway is noted for smuggling. Search your compartment for contraband before the journey commences, and secure the door.

Areas bordering on Siberia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos and Burma are poorly

policed. Drug smuggling and related crimes are on the increase in Yunnan province.

An earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale occurred on 21 January near Kashgar, Xinjiang Province. The quake has caused a great deal of damage and could affect visitors using the Karakorum pass route from Pakistan to Urumqi.

Only Air China, China Southern, China Eastern and Shanghai Airlines are believed to carry out internationally recognised aircraft maintenance procedures.

Bargain of the week

This could be the month to go back to Pan Am. The US airline has begun flying again within North America, and Trailfinders (0171-937 5400) has stitched together a deal with Virgin Atlantic to take travellers to the underrated destination of Puerto Rico. You fly from Gatwick to Miami on Richard Branson's airline, then transfer to Pan Am for the short hop to San Juan. The deal costs £325 return, including tax, and runs from 15 February until 10 March.

For more globetrotting bargains see the new Travel & Money section in tomorrow's Independent on Sunday.

True or false

Smoking is prohibited on all trains in New Zealand

True – almost. The compendious new third edition of Colin Taylor's *Australia and New Zealand by Train* (Bradt, £10.95) suggests where smokers should congregate: on the open observation car of the TransAlpine from Christchurch to Greymouth.

This is formed from the power cars, the ends of which are open to the elements like a cattle truck.

Passengers stand in the breeze to enjoy not only the sight but the sounds and smell of the scenery – and smokers here can enjoy a crafty drag, which is prohibited everywhere else on New Zealand's railways.

Whether or not you smoke, the author commends this line as "one of the top 10 train journeys of the world".

To coincide with the 75th Anniversary of the Discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb and a new exhibition of the treasures found

A Celebration Performance at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Thebes

AIDA

Giuseppe Verdi never realised his dream of staging Aida in its actual setting. The nearest he came was a performance at the Cairo Opera House in 1871. Now over a 120 years later the Egyptian government have decided to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb with both a special exhibition of the treasures found and for what promises to be a spectacular presentation of Aida in the idyllic setting of Queen Hatshepsut's Temple at Thebes.

A cast of hundreds includes artists from the Cairo Ballet Company and Symphony Orchestra, a chorus of 300 members, 100s of Egyptian soldiers to take part in the triumphal march, plus many on horseback who will ride up the Processional Way into the temple itself. The five-night itinerary also includes a flight to Cairo and a stay at one of the world's most luxurious hotels – Mena House which overlooks the Pyramids, for a visit to the Egyptian Museum where on display will be treasures from Tutankhamun's Tomb rarely seen by the public. The visit concludes with a Son et Lumière performance at the Sphinx and Pyramids. This will take place during an 8-day period in October, probably the loveliest month to visit Upper Egypt.

The Programme

Day 1 Depart Gatwick by Air 2000 or Monarch Airways non-stop flight to Luxor. On arrival transfer to the 5-star Nile Diamond which will be our accommodation and our base.

Day 2 Visit the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, containing 62 excavated tombs. Continue to Medinet Habu and the Colossi of Memnon before returning to our vessel.

Day 3 The MS Diamond sets sail in the morning through a timeless Nile scenery to Qena. On arrival make the short drive to Denderah to visit the Temple of Hathor and the Tomb of Osiris. Return to Luxor in the evening.

Day 4 Visit the Temple of Karnak and the Temple of Luxor. In the afternoon relax and enjoy the sights of the Nile as we make a cruise south of Luxor returning in afternoon. After cocktails and canapés travel to Queen Hatshepsut's Temple for the celebration performance of Aida. Afterwards return to the vessel for a Gala Dinner.

Day 5 Fly to Cairo and travel onwards to the Pyramids at Giza and the Hotel Mena House that overlooks them. Visit the Egyptian Museum and the 75th anniversary exhibition displaying the treasures from Tutankhamun's Tomb which are rarely on public view. In the evening attend a Son et Lumière performance in front of the Sphinx and Pyramids.

Day 6 The morning is reserved for independent sightseeing or relaxation in the hotel's grounds. Our special flight leaves Cairo in the evening for the return flight to Gatwick.



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The MS Diamond
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The Venue - The Temple of Queen Hatshepsut

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A giant £1 coin inspires wishful thinking...

Simon Calder visits the British Museum's new Money Gallery

Swindon: that would be the ideal location for a brand-new Money Gallery. The Mondex project in the Wiltshire town, aimed at creating a cashless community, means that hard currency is closer to becoming a museum piece in Swindon than anywhere else in Britain.

But, on the basis that London has a bigger catchment area, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank – which owns the Midland – has stumped up for a rich new exhibition hall in the British Museum. The Money Gallery opened yesterday. And like any decent savings account, it is already attracting interest.

From the main entrance to the British Museum, battle your way through the swirling coachloads and ascend the main staircase – which looks as though it could be modelled on the approach to a moneylender's temple. Swing round to the right, and locate room 68. An icily pale-green chamber full of exhibits worth their weight in gold (or silver, or bronze).

The basic principles are as sound as the Bank of England. Four millennia of money, from Mesopotamia to Mondex, are traced out in a room the size and shape of a long, thin, high street bank. Ancient accountants set the tone, with the ancient equivalent of a till receipt: a clay tablet issued in Ur, now in Iraq, in 2046BC. It records a transaction where seven oxen could be bought for seven-and-a-half shekels each.

The remarkable thing about the ancient coins is how little they have changed. The first recognisable tokens, made of gold and silver as a measurable and portable store of value, were issued 2,500 years ago in what is now Turkey. Shortly afterwards the first forgers started work, plating base metals to look like solid gold coins. Government

financial crises were not far behind: at the time of the Peloponnesian War in 407BC, the Athenians were so strapped for cash that they melted down the statues of Victory on the Acropolis to make coins to finance the war effort. Two thousand years and miles away, these remain as small and bright as buttons.

Around the birth of Christ, the first experiments with the modern concept of money began. The emperor Wang Mang of China issued tokens that he promised were worth much more than the value of the metal they contained – honest. Few believed him.

It took the development of world trade to create a system of money that is not based on precious commodities. Receipts issued by gold merchants comprised the first paper money. You could use these vouchers as if they were gold coin, because they were backed by precious metals in the vaults. But the crucial message for children is what happened next. When the "Gold Standard" was abandoned (which in Britain took place in 1931), the result was a value system based upon belief: a £10 note can only be worth 70 minutes of labour for the average British worker, or nearly two million Turkish lire, if society believes it to be so. This is a – perhaps the – prime example of how a community functions.

Once children have come to terms with this concept, there is not too much more to hold their interest. A giant £1 coin inspires some wishful thinking among those who consider their pocket money too modest, while a big bronze cash register rings out the days when £1.5s 6d would buy a good family day out rather than merely a cup of tea in the museum cafe.

A British lottery ticket from 1786 shows how ideas are as circular as coins.



Richard Edmond and Lucas Summers coming to terms with the implications of cash

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLA KURTZ

though the prize was rather less than tonight's roll-over jackpot. And, at the centre of the gallery, the proceeds of an unresolved court case from three centuries ago are left splaying from leather money bags: the protagonists died before the case was resolved, so the state kept the cash. And, straight from the shops of Swindon, is a Mondex card heralding the cashless society.

The \$64,000 question is, how rewarding will children find the new gallery? The explanatory texts seemed aimed at 6ft bankers – who, unlike children, will find the information at eye level. Most of the exhibits are at lower altitude, but the overall impression is that the gallery is firmly for grown-up devotees of dosh. The Bank of England Museum, across in the City, is much more hands-on – but, annoyingly, does not open at weekends.

Back at the Money Gallery, though, two nine-year-olds from St Peter's School in Hammersmith were coming to terms

with the implications of cash – and showing that they were already fairly financially astute.

Richard Edmond: "I liked the really big £1 best – I'm bored of seeing the small £1 coins, though I do like the new ones with different designs. When I saw all the money spread out from the money bags in the middle of the room, I thought 'That's a lot', but then I saw that it was only £75."

Lucas Summers: "I think if we still had the old money I'd feel richer. I liked the big old cash register, but I couldn't really understand the numbers on it. I try to save up my pocket money and keep it in the bank."

The deal

The Money Gallery is in the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (0171-636 1555). The nearest tube stations are Holborn (Central and Piccadilly lines) and Tottenham Court Road

(Central and Northern). Limited (and expensive) parking is available nearby. Disabled access: lifts to the upper floor. A leaflet about facilities for the disabled is available upon request.

Admission: free, though donations are requested upon entrance to the museum, and for the introductory guide to the exhibition.

Opening times: 10am-5pm from Monday to Saturday, 2.30pm-6pm on Sundays. The museum will close on Good Friday (28 March) and May Bank Holiday Monday (5 May).

Food: there is a café in the museum, but it is inconveniently hard to reach from the Money Gallery. The journey involves a long walk through half-a-dozen ancient civilisations, and if you take a wrong turn you could find yourself in Assyria rather than a tea bar. Once there, the sandwich plate – a sandwich, scone and cake, plus tea – will revive children and their parents for a modest £3.95.

'Are we nearly there?'

There's a wealth of places where kids can discover the history of money, and none of those below asks you to part with any cash to get in.

Bank of England Museum, Bartholomew Lane, London EC2 (0171-601 4878)
Traces the history of the Bank, which numbers among past customers one Horatio Nelson. On show are gold bars and the world's finest collection of bank notes, including handwritten bills. An interactive dealing desk gives a taste of modern money markets: pikes and muskets once used to defend the bank remind visitors of more lo-tech days. Open 10-5pm Mon-Fri.

Museum of Mankind, Burlington Gardens, London W1 (0171-437 2224)
The Gilded Image shows gleaming pre-Columbian gold from South and Central America. Not money so much as valuable body art. Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm.

The Sovereign Gallery, 7 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 (0171-828 8724)
An insight into the 500-year history of that most romantic of coins, the sovereign, including the handsome 20-shilling gold sovereign introduced by Henry VII to dignify his new Tudor dynasty. Open Mon-Fri 10am-4pm.

Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford (01865-278 000)
About 20 cases of money from Ancient Greek to early English, curated to illustrate historical themes including athletics and architecture. Guides help children to learn how the iconography of coins reflects political propaganda and mythical beliefs. Open Tue-Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 2pm-4pm.

Hunterian Gallery, University of Glasgow, University Avenue, Glasgow (0141-330 4221)
Children will be pleased by the idea of a case holding £1m. Unfortunately, it's all in chopped up tenners (worn-out bank notes are used as fertiliser). Scotland's largest coin collection covers forgery and early bartering (iron arrowheads from Nigeria, tea bricks from China), pieces of eight and the small change of Cleopatra. Youngsters are encouraged to try their hand at identification. Open Mon-Sat, 9.30am-5pm.

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سكزا من الامم

Fixing a mole

Angela Wilkes joins a first-aid course for wildlife



First catch the animal - no easy task. Then make a note of the injuries

PHOTOGRAPH: RSPCA

Rescuing injured wild animals isn't easy. An oiled guillemot will stab its saviour's eyeball; a seal has Rottweiler jaws and can bite with remarkable speed; a tawny owl can lock tendons to make its feet virtually inseparable from its rescuer's hand.

Yet many animals would not be injured in the first place if it weren't for us - and our toxic waste, litter, poisons, snares, guns, discarded fishing tackle and vehicles. At least 50,000 badgers are killed on the roads each year, says the National Federation of Badger Groups, a fifth of the total badger population. Much of this wholesale slaughter is hidden, with hundreds of thousands more native British mammals and birds dying unseen, from dehydration, gangrene and flybowl.

No wonder more and more people are guilty trying to pick up the pieces, taking the injured wildlife to the nearest vet or animal rescue centre. And now there is, by popular demand, a first-aid course for wildlife run by the RSPCA at its Mallydams Wood education centre near Hastings, East Sussex. The centre was originally meant for the RSPCA's own staff, then was extended to volunteer wildlife rehabilitators and other interested members of the public.

The charity also runs three big specialist wildlife hospitals (in Cheshire, Somerset and Norfolk). Much of the expensive, state-of-the-art equipment

and surgical expertise in these has been adapted from experience with pets and farm animals.

The RSPCA estimates that at least 700 independent animal rescue and rehabilitation units are operating throughout this country. Anyone who calls the RSPCA's 24-hour emergency line with a wildlife casualty is given the address of the nearest unit.

Getting the injured or sick animal to a vet or wildlife rescue centre fast should be the first-aid's top priority, says Richard Thompson, an RSPCA wildlife officer. Ideally, that should be within six hours. "And often, an animal's best chance of survival rests with the quality of the first aid it has received," he says.

But it is important not to cut corners in the rush. Witness the man who heaved 30lb of unconscious badger on to his car passenger seat. By the time he had got round to the driver's door, the badger was up on the dashboard. It would be rescued quickly but it was injured and untreated.

Another rescue bid, of a swan that appeared to be stuck in a frozen pond, also went wrong when a young man fell through the ice. Other people have freed snared foxes and badgers by cutting the wire. But the animals have run off with the snare's noose still cutting into deep, encircling wounds.

Plan ahead, move deliberately and slowly, and know your limitations, advises Mr Thompson. Wildlife first

aid should do the same as its human equivalent: preserve life, prevent deterioration and promote recovery. Here are 10 vital pointers to help wildlife first-aiders do just that.

1. Be safe. Check traffic, landslip possibilities, live current, incoming tides etc. Don't try to shift anything too big or fierce, solo. Better to call an animal ambulance than miff it. Pinpoint the location; map references help when it comes to releasing the animal (a badger may be killed as an intruder if on the wrong ground).
2. Be aware of pollutants, poisons (Warfarin from bait can enter the skin), and diseases (rabies, leptospirosis, chlamydia, bird-lung, etc) that can be passed on to humans. Wear goggles (remember, some birds have beaks sharp enough to harpoon fish). Leather gardening gloves protect from bites, pecks and scratches.
3. Catch the animal. If the casualty is up and running you may get only one chance, so move slowly, keeping yourself between it and the escape route. Try to back it into a corner, or into a house. You could throw over a towel, scarf or coat, so that the animal is wrapped round to restrain limbs or wings. Indoors, turn off lights to calm the animal down.
4. Monitor the casualty. Write down what you see, and watch what comes out at either end. Cover the animal's head to reduce stress. Keep dogs and

onlookers away. Remember, an unconscious animal can come round, or deteriorate, suddenly.

5. Secure the casualty. Make sure the box/cage/sack is shut tight, but ventilated. Remember foxes can bite through wire, cardboard and baskets. Put birds into boxes, not cages, to avoid feather/wing damage. Restrict noise and handling to minimise stress.

6. Do an 'ABC': make sure the Airway is clear. Put the animal in the best position for easy Breathing. Check Circulation. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and heart massage aren't, of course, practicable options. But you can stem bleeding by direct pressure on an artery. Don't remove tight wires, etc. They may be stopping blood loss.

7. Immobilise the animal. It may have broken bones. Put rolled towels either side of it in the container (leave splinting to a vet).

8. Try to keep your trip to the rescue centre/vet short and smooth. Double-check that the container is secure - you don't want a rampant casualty loose in the car.

9. Keep the animal warm if you have to delay. Newspaper is an excellent insulator; or keep the casualty wrapped up with a hot-water bottle, or in an airing cupboard for gentle, all-round warmth. Don't overdo it - a shocked animal can't regulate its own body temperature. Don't keep it more than six hours - an unconscious

animal with an unemptied bladder can die of kidney failure.

10. Record on the box lid when, where and how you found the animal, and any treatment given. Add your name and phone number.

The RSPCA will not generally release a recovered but crippled casualty that cannot cope on its own. But some animal sanctuaries will take blinded hedgehogs, three-legged foxes et al, subject to a vet's advice. It's up to you to phone in and find out what has happened to your injured animal once you've handed it over. Vets are obliged, by a voluntary British Veterinary Association directive, to treat wildlife emergencies free.

The RSPCA has a 24-hour animal emergency line (0990 555999). Details of animal courses for adults and children from RSPCA, Mallydams Wood, Peter James Lane, Fairlight, East Sussex TN35 4AH (01424 812035), £10 or £15 a day. Brochure of day courses for children (centres nationwide, book early) from RSPCA Education, HQ, Cussey, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG (01403 264181). The RSPCA lists members of the British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. Tiggywinkle's Wildlife Hospital Trust, Aston Road, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8AF lists 200 members of the European Wildlife Rehabilitation Association and has a 24-hour casualty advice line (01844 292292).



Duff Hart-Davis

One day in the summer of 1969, a man I hadn't seen before arrived at our back door. He was short and stocky, with a neatly trimmed red beard, and by way of introduction he said, "I'm dying of cancer, and I don't want any bloody sympathy."

His manner was so abrupt that I was slightly taken aback. "All right," I replied. "What do you want?"

He explained that he was a mustard-keen deer-stalker, but that now, being too weak to extract a dead beast from the wood, he could no longer go out on his own. Could he come out with me when the season started?

After some discussion I agreed to take him, whereupon he said, "There's only one condition."

"What's that?"

"That when I die you'll have my dog."

Again I was nonplussed, and asked, "What is it?"

Returning to his car, he let out a beautiful black Labrador called Kate, then about a year old. Once more I was cautious - but after I had seen how well she was shaping as a gun dog, I agreed to inherit her when the time came.

Ron did not live very long. During periods of remission he managed a few expeditions into the woods, and I think greatly enjoyed them; but then in 1970 the disease took a final hold, and he faded away. Kate joined our household, and ever since then we have had black Labradors.

To call Kate lethargic would be a classic understatement: she was so dozy that once, when an artist was secretly drawing her as a present for me, my wife had to fire a .22 repeatedly through an open window into the flower-bed to keep her alert. Yet out shooting she sprang to life, and she became brilliant at tracking deer.

In due course Kate produced Pumpkin. Pumpkin produced Pansy, and Pansy produced Zephyr; but Zephyr - alas - produced nobody, due to some hormonal eccentricity, so that when she died last week at the age of 13, it was a particularly sad occasion: not only the end of a life, but also the end of a line.

I buried her in a cove at the corner of our big field - and no activity puts one in closer touch with the earth than the digging of a grave. The ground was covered in ivy, so that first I had to chop down through a mass of fine roots. Beneath the surface layer the soil became more like clay, dry and

Nature gives all creatures a certain span. In human terms, Zephyr was in her nineties. She simply came to the end of the canine road

hard, but easy to cut through. About a foot down I found a fragment of blue-and-white china, showing that someone had dug there years ago. The morning had started grey, but as I worked the sun came out and shone brightly. I thought back over the careers of the four bitches, their triumphs in the shooting field, their crazy habits, their sense of humour, the way they had won our hearts and rendered us speechless with exasperation.

I consoled myself with the knowledge that all four had good working lives. Kate was run over prematurely, crossing a main road in pursuit of a pheasant, but the others reached a ripe old age.

If you live in the country, it is no good being sentimental: you must accept that nature gives all creatures a certain span, and you cannot expect any more. In human terms, Zephyr was in her nineties - nearly twice the age that Kate's first owner reached - and simply came to the end of the canine road.

In the hazels above me bluebirds were singing. Down on the lake geese kept calling, and buzzards whistled above the escarpment. Up the hill our ewes, now heavily pregnant, were enjoying the sunshine. Their lambs will arrive in March, but even though they are of pedigree stock, most will go to the butcher at the age of six or seven months.

In other words, even as I delved into the earth, the life of the land was carrying on all around, and I found this comforting. Just as I finished, heaping up a little rectangular mound, clouds coming in from the east blotted out the sun, and the morning turned grey, which seemed appropriate enough.

After nearly 27 years with dogs in the house, it feels odd to have none. "Get another," friends urge, and probably we will. But it will have to have quite some charm and sense of humour if it is to match the character of the four black ladies who have gone before.

Buzzards go east

These magnificent birds of prey are on the increase. Daniel Butler reports

"Perhaps because they're our commonest big raptor, all too often they get ignored by ornithologists, but buzzards are magnificent birds which are doing really well."

Innes Sim, a researcher for the RSPB, has just finished a three-year research project studying buzzards along the Welsh border. Although his census of soaring adult birds is not precise, it gives a good guide to the number of breeding pairs, and the results have surprised even the experts. A preliminary analysis suggests that the population density has roughly doubled since 1983.

One reason for the raised eyebrows is that, despite the increase in numbers, so far buzzards have not expanded their range to the same extent. Radio tracking of birds in Dorset may answer that conundrum. It seems that buzzards are conservative: "Although the young birds disperse widely at first, they tend to return to their nest area when they reach breeding age," explains Chris Mead, of the British Trust for Ornithology.

As a result, until recently the rate of expansion eastwards has been limited to around 1 kilometre a year, but there are now signs that densities have reached saturation:

"There is a point at which a shortage of food and nest sites will force them to be more adventurous in looking for new breeding territories," says Innes Sim.

Buzzards soaring on their broad, 4ft wingspans are now common sights above some motorways, and in just a few years they have spread east from Bristol as far as Newbury. The expansion is not confined to major roads. Scotland and Ireland have seen big increases and even the relatively buzzard-unfriendly geography of Suffolk has just scored its first success in a century.

Not surprisingly, however, the most spectacular expansions are along the frontiers of the r. Welsh, Scottish and West Country strongholds. Wiltshire and Avon have seen dramatic increases, with the number of sightings reported to the Oxford Ornithological Society doubling between 1993 and 1994 alone, while breeding pairs in the area have rocketed from three in the mid-Eighties to about 20 today. So what underlies this rapid growth in numbers? "It is probably linked to the explosion in rabbit numbers," says Innes Sim.

The result has been a succession of record-breaking breeding seasons: "Using BTO data, the



Buzzard and rabbit prey PHOTOGRAPH: PLANET EARTH

RSPB has found that for the last 10 years or so buzzards have produced more young than at any time since the Fifties," says Sim. Though an average of 1.7 fledglings surviving from each successful breeding attempt may seem low, in fact it represents rapid population growth. Buzzards are long-lived and for the population to remain static, each pair has to produce only two young which reach adulthood, from perhaps 10 breeding attempts. This is a rare environmental story - representing unqualified good

news. Unlike the voracious goshawk, these large raptors prey almost exclusively on pests: "They're not fussy," says Sim. "During the breeding season they take a lot of rabbits, but we've also found they've eaten rats, moles and young crows."

This is not to say they escape persecution. The RSPB says more buzzards are killed illegally than any other bird of prey. As inveterate scavengers, they are prone to poisoning from illegal baits left for crows and foxes; their slow flight makes them tempting for the trigger-happy; and their noisy breeding calls mean their nests are easy to find. Nevertheless, Sim says, most keepers now recognise that buzzards are harmless.

Chris Mead, however, believes that persecution explains much of the buzzard's slowness to spread east. His theory is that deaths within an existing range cause young birds to stay and fill the vacuum, rather than disperse to uncolonised areas.

But, he says, the magnificent sight of buzzards soaring effortlessly on thermals is likely to become more common. And, though they will never be plentiful in flat, open areas of the South-east, "sooner or later they'll certainly get there."

THE INDEPENDENT

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The island of Djerba, situated in the Gulf of Gabes off the southern coast of Tunisia, is an escapee's paradise of white sands and waving palms. The island has been referred to as 'The Land of the Lotus Eaters' since the time of Homer's *Odyssey*. Today the magic of Djerba stays much the same. Its dazzling beaches extend for a staggering 130 kilometres. Stay at the luxury four star Hotel Djerba Palace which offers spacious accommodation and superb facilities including indoor and outdoor pools, Turkish bath, fitness room, sports facilities, a range of restaurants and evening entertainment. The hotel has 20 acres of garden and direct access to the beach via a 300m walkway.

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Six of the best interior designs

The shapes of things to come

Interior decorating is taking over from television as the second most popular indoor pursuit of the Nineties, making it an increasingly competitive business subject. Even the professional tastemaker has a hard job keeping up with the latest trends. Will it be pink or black? Printed or woven fabrics? Halogen lights or chandeliers? Minimalist or opulent?

One month into 1997 and the trends are already becoming clear. Here are some musts for the smart insider.

Glass acts

Suddenly bulbous shapes are much in evidence. Nicholas Arroyave-Portela's ceramic vessels have a remarkably tactile quality to them, making one want to run one's fingers over their intriguing bumps and dimples. Simon Moore's skilfully hand-blown glass vases (after a design by hip architect Nigel Coates, Professor of Architecture at the Royal College of Art) give the appearance of being a touch tipsy, slightly leaning to one side.

Nicholas Arroyave-Portela, *Balls Ford Studios, 86 Culford Mews, London N1 (0171-923 4736)*.

Simon Moore, *Unit Two, Union Court, Union Road, Clapham, London SW4 (0171-498 0080)*.

Cool chic

For a nation whose favourite leisure activity is gardening it is not surprising that there is always a demand for fabrics depicting plants in some form or another. A few years ago, brightly coloured rose-strewn chintzes were all the rage. Now a more sophisticated cooler look has emerged drawing upon 18th and 19th century botanical prints for inspiration.

Zoe Hope's handwoven silk blinds - which incorporate found leaves - are beautifully executed and have a charming simplicity. Clearly influenced by botanical prints is the Nieuw Amsterdam Tulip (£82.50 a metre) by Brunswick & Fils, a leading American fabric house. The Timney Fowler Heritage Collection includes designs of various botanical motifs. Timney Fowler muted colour palette.

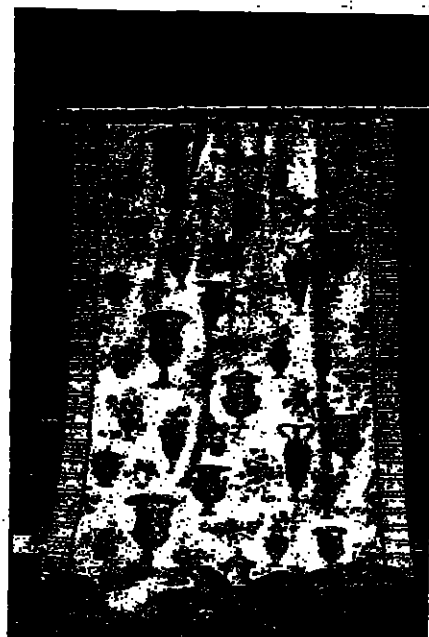
Zoe Hope, *Unit 7, Cockpit Yard Workshops, Northington street, London WC1 (0171-813 3034)*.

Brunswick & Fils, *10 The Chambers, Chelsea Harbour Drive, London SW10 (0171-351 5797)*.
Timney Fowler, *388 The King's Road, London SW3 (0171-352 2263)*.

Metallic magic

Not since the 1960s have metallics been so glamorous. Osborne & Little's imaginative range of Coloratura wallpapers are the prime exponent of this look and are available in more than 60 colourways that "go beyond the usual paint finishes to show the subtle interactions of paints, inks and glazes". Sacho Hesselein's metallic fabrics - including one called Iron - are the perfect complement and would look stunning if used as curtains hung on a glass pole with silvered glass finials from McKinney & Co. A truly elegant and sophisticated look.

Osborne & Little, *304 The King's Road,*



Simple in silk: One of Timney Fowler's designs

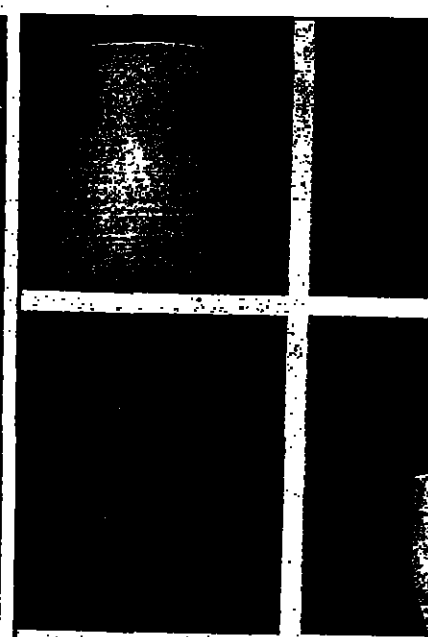


Soft and sweet: Sheers can be found at Osborne & Little

London SW3 (0171-352 1456)
Sacho Hesselein, *24 Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, London SW10 (0171-352 6168)*
McKinney & Co, *1 Wandon Road, London SW6 (0171-384 1377)*

Shades of velvet

The close correlation between the fashion and interior design worlds is demonstrated by the abundance of velvet furnishing fabrics suddenly available. This trend closely follows this winter's ultimate fashion accessory, a *dévoré* velvet scarf. Camilla Ridley's velvet *dévoré*-covered lampshades are an ingenious way of exploiting the contrasting textural effects of the fabric. Renwick & Clark gathered *dévoré* velvet shades are another attractive alternative for those wanting a softer feminine look.



Come with curves: The work of Nicholas Arroyave-Portela is a reaction to recent minimalism. Their bumps and dimples create a tactile quality

Camilla Ridley Designs (0171-221 7329)
Renwick & Clark, *190 Ebury Street, London SW1 (0171-730 8913)*

Radical sheers

Not since Celia Birtwell introduced her stars and paisley motifs has there been such a radical new look for sheers. But this time the multi-coloured, spotted, checked, striped and floral-patterned sheers are the brainchild of Nina Campbell, better known as a purveyor of the English country house look. Printed on floppy cotton voile they have exotic names including Caduranga, Agincourt Stripe and Famille Rose. The colours are in soft pastels shades of rose, sky blue and primrose. Stronger hues of green, red and charcoal more characteristic of Nina Campbell are also available.

Available through Osborne & Little as above

Felted fabrics

Felt is suddenly smart and no-one has done more to promote it than Asta Barrington, whose pretty felted throws show an innate sense of colour and love of pattern and texture. A graduate of the Royal College of Art in 1995, Asta's distinctive work is also notable for an imaginative use of various techniques which create unusual textures and finishes, drawing on the natural world for organic shapes.

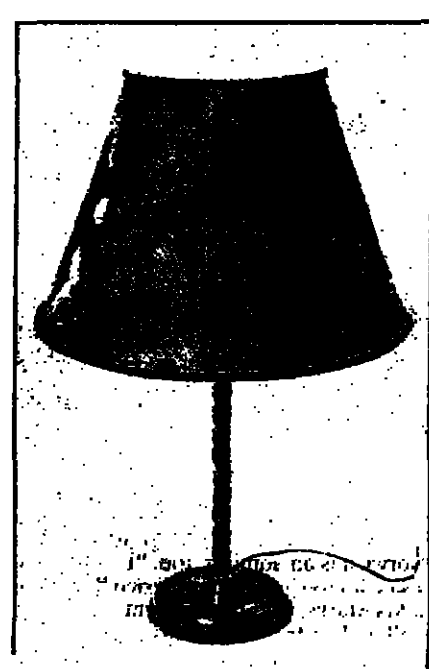
Asta Barrington, *Studio 17, Cornwell House, 21 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1 (0171-251 1763)*. Also available at *The Cross, 141 Portland Road, London W11 (0171-727 6760)*.

Amicia de Moubray



Fine finials: Silvered glass designs from McKinney & Co

Fine in felt: Scarves from the Asta Barrington Studio



Sophisticated shade: Velvet designs from Camilla Ridley

Adwatch

A lottery of lotteries

"It's Winsday", Camelot's new campaign triumphantly declares. The National Lottery operator is spending £8 million to persuade us to play its new mid-week lottery draw. Success, however, may not be easily bought: Camelot must combat not only the growing number of ways to have a flutter but ingrained shopping habits, too.

In the ad, a man spies through a telescope the magic hand of fortune pointing at him. Two girls pass by. "One day I'll meet my prince charming," one says to her friend. "It's me!", the man cries as he runs by. The girls shake their heads in disagreement and walk on. Little did they know...

Plans for a midweek National Lottery draw were announced last October. Camelot estimates it will generate an extra £6 million a week in prize money, benefiting good causes by an estimated £3.8 million a week. The new draw will take place on BBC1's midweek lottery show which starts this week. The timing is, to say the least, fortuitous.

Camelot originally planned to launch the midweek draw last spring. However, sales then were higher than expected. But by last autumn, Camelot was predicting annual total sales for 1996/7 would be down on those for 1995/6 - a result, it claims, of the volatile instant scratchcards business.

A steady stream of new games are the life blood of the lottery and scratchcard business - a fact underlined by rival organisations, like Littlewoods and UK Charity Lotteries, which have introduced a number of new games over the past year. Now, Camelot hopes its midweek draw can

boost total weekly sales by 20 per cent.

"Winsday", created by Saatchi & Saatchi, is in the same style as previous "It Could Be You" ads. But will it persuade us to spend more?

Occasional lottery player Mary Cartwright, 63, thinks not. "I enjoy a flutter on a Saturday night but if I bought one midweek too, I'd worry I'd be on a slippery slope." Frequent players, she believes, would play whatever the day. And, according to Sue Anderson, 32, who buys at least three tickets a week, she could be right.


"My concern would be what would I do if my numbers came up on a Wednesday, and I only played Saturday," Ms Anderson says. "It is definitely a clever way to get me to spend more."

Ninety per cent of us has bought at least one lottery ticket while 62 per cent do so every week. "This means the new draw is unlikely to grow total numbers playing much further," Glover says. "The longer term objective is to draw occasional players to play more often."

There is, however, the problem of growing competition. Deregulation is allowing more forms of gaming to promote their wares. Littlewoods, for example, is now running an aggressive campaign featuring Alan Hansen - part of a strategy to re-position itself as all about football rather than just jackpots. Glover believes this offers a lesson for them all.

"It's all about focusing on core strengths," he says. Which is why Camelot is likely to continue promoting itself as Britain's biggest prize draw for quite some time to come.


Meg Carter



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'Hello!' and the art of optimism

Does an exhibition of covers herald the beginning of a new movement? By David Lister



PHOTOMONTAGE: JONATHAN ANSTEE

Just as last year's Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon's slow-motion video installations illuminated the inner psychological turmoils of urban life, so a new exhibition opening on Monday will illuminate the external synthesis between art, fashion and the media that define *fin-de-siècle* culture.

The exhibition of 52 covers of *Hello!* magazine runs for the whole of February in the Gallery Bar at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane. If this is an exhibition that will move to the Tate when the Turner Prize shortlist is announced in the autumn, then we might be witnessing the start of a

new cultural movement – "the art of optimism", a celebration of aristocracy and arrivistes in pastel shades that will make Damien Hirst's explorations of death and preservation look passé.

In the words of the show's curator, Caroline Parr, "the covers are glamorously colourful. It's a chronicle of our times; we go from weddings to divorces and deaths. Yes, the covers are paparazzi photographs, but this is serious paparazzi. There are people having fun, and there are people in pain. That is an art form."

To those who are not students of the new wave in British art, Ms

Parr's words might appear to be a series of *non sequiturs*. But contemporary art historians would not see them as such. The *Hello!* exhibition is, on one level, a bunch of magazine covers in clip-on frames; on a deeper level, however, it is one expressionist canvas where love and life find no easy linear route.

Simon Tait, author of *Palaces of Discovery*, a guide to the treasures in Britain's museums, sees the exhibition as being part of a grand tradition. "Britain's museum and gallery history is full of adventure and dotiness," he says, "though to make an exhibition of personalities mostly famous for making exhibi-

tions of themselves seems a generous interpretation of the word populism."

To find brightness in gloom is a tradition that stretches from classical painting to the Pop art of the Sixties. But the covers of *Hello!* perform this function with a panache that cocks a snook at art critics clinging to a narrow belief that art must mirror social realism.

Two months after Robert Maxwell's death by drowning, his widow, Betty, shows *Hello!* around their lavish French villa. While the rest of the world gossips about how estranged the Prince and Princess of Wales look on their visit to Korea,

Hello!'s coverline proclaims that they are carrying out their duties with dignity. But it is the shock juxtapositions and the ensuing element of surprise that give these canvases their real value. Underneath the confident white on red 'Hello!' with its signature exclamation mark, reminiscent of Roy Lichtenstein's American Pop, is Fergie in a green gown, revealing an expanse of thigh. "The Duchess of York Poses as a Model!" reads the coverline, but with the subtle omission of the expected exclamation mark.

Most notable is the eclecticism of subject matter that the canvases can conjure up. All branches of the

Royal Family adorn the covers along with the nearby Royals such as Koo Stark. No great surprise there. But what is being celebrated on the cover beneath Fergie? None other than the marriage of racing commentator Derek Thompson and his personal assistant.

The world of horses, like the world of art, can unite royalty, the landed gentry and even the chap who does the verbals on Channel 4 on a Saturday afternoon in one glorious postmodern collage.

'Hello! Covers Exhibition' runs to the end of February in the Gallery Bar, Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London W1 (0171-499 6363)

Under the counter with Lindsay Calder

In my book contraception is a dirty word: the Pill can be dangerous, condoms can split, the Coil give you a nasty infection – and a friend of mine had to go back to have it trimmed down because it was stabbing her partner. Gruesome. If you use the Cop you practically have to take a flight bag with you to carry all the bits. And the Sponge and the Femidom just conjure up images of school pudding and boil-in-the-bag.

So it was with some interest that I saw an ad for Persona – a "system" that allows you to "make love" without using any contraceptives. Sure, I thought. The catch is?

Well, it wasn't a steal – £49.95 for the "monitor" and £9.95 for a box of eight "test sticks". Basically the deal is that you press a button on the monitor when your period starts, and do 16 urine samples the first month and eight every month thereafter. By measuring your hormone levels it tells you when to Do It and when Not To. Simple. Well, sort of...

The 62-page booklet gives supposedly clear instructions on how to log on to your pocket-sized system. Unfortunately there was no Persona For Dummies handbook. On my "M" day (day 1) I was thrown into a panic over when exactly I should press my M as this would establish my "testing window". There is, thank God, a helpline – sorry, "careline", which after leaving me on hold for 20 minutes, informed me that around 8am would be a good time for me to press.

After this it is relatively plain sailing. Waking up to your monitor in the morning is rather like waking up at the traffic lights: Green = Go for it! Red = Not Tonight! And Amber = A sample please! Amber is my least favourite light. This means using a test stick (or a pee stick, as my husband affectionately calls it) and trying to pee on it for three seconds during your testing window, then inserting it in the monitor's "test stick slot". Five minutes later a verdict of Green or Red will be reached. As an added bonus a cute little 0 with a dot in the centre flashes when you are ovulating.

I have to say, apart from the peeing bit, so far so good. The system is allegedly "as reliable as a condom", but I'm not without my fears. Every Tuesday I have to hide it from the cleaner in case she scrubs it with something abrasive and inadvertently causes us to become parents.

Persona is available exclusively from Boots. For more details call Carline (0800 994455).

'Look, think, take your time' – the secret to collecting

Sotheby's contemporary art curator Janice Blackburn talks to John Windsor about buying a collector's item

Sotheby's has appointed a private collector, Janice Blackburn, to curate its first selling exhibition of contemporary decorative arts (which runs for a week, from 6 February). Her architect-designed home in Hampstead could be mistaken for a gallery, with its polished floorboards and sparsely displayed, named artefacts: curvaceous tables and chairs by Ron Arad and Mary Little; an exotic piece of plumbing by Fred Baier that serves as a double bed.

There are 77 artists' names in the exhibition catalogue – furniture-makers, ceramicists, glass-blowers, jewellers and lighting wizards, most of them virtually unknown to the public, but all well known to Ms Blackburn and her husband, David, a lawyer and property developer, who have winked them out in a search-and-buy operation that has spanned 15 years.

With young home-makers eager to buy works of art by up-and-comers, the couple's expertise is at a premium. London auctioneers are competing fiercely for the "modern design" market and Sotheby's has copied Bonhams, which held its first annual decorative arts selling exhibition – or "tag sale" in art market jargon – in 1992. There is no bidding. This is fixed-price retailing, with purchases replaced from stock. Dealers, needless to say, are livid.

Ms Blackburn's secret? She makes it sound simple. Her advice, after the ritual incantation of "buy for love, not for investment" was: "look, think, and take your time".

How many novice collectors feel an urge to snap up that vase or brooch before someone else gets it? Ms Blackburn says: "You may miss one or two pieces, but if the artists



Collect call: 'I don't buy safe things,' says Janice Blackburn (above), 'safe is boring'

PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH DORNEY

are worth anything, they are not going to go away. Give yourself time to think. Do you really like it?

"For example, we first saw Mary Little's furniture [often "dressed" and humanoid-looking; bought by design museums] 11 years ago at her degree show at the Royal College of Art. We loved a wooden chair of hers, but did not buy. Five years later we noticed her name at a Crafts Council exhibition – and bought.

"As for Ron Arad [tables with glass tops and twisted metal legs; hollow, welded steel armchairs that sell ex-studio for £9,000 plus] we found his work a bit of a shock. Most people we knew thought it was a joke. But we went back to his studio time after time, just to look. He must have been sick of the sight of us. Now, if I had to pick the person in the selling exhibition whose work is most important, I'd pick Ron."

And before the thinking? "If you have no confidence in your own taste, then look at more and more art works. That way, you will also learn to appreciate the work that is unique, unlike any other."

Where to look? A surprising number of names in Sotheby's exhibition are graduates of the RCA – described by Ms Blackburn as "a hotbed, getting better and better". She spots them at the college's

annual degree shows in June. "No need to buy immediately," she reiterates (and degree shows do tend to be overpriced), "take the exhibitors' cards and keep in touch with them."

The most striking work at last year's RCA degree show for Ms Blackburn was Kate Wilkinson's costume jewellery made from tinplate pill boxes, strands of plastic and glass beads. "I homed in on her," she says. A spiky Wilkinson necklace,

worn round the neck of Joan Bakewell as she presented the Turner prize in December, stole the show.

"Whenever I see a degree show advertised," says Ms Blackburn, "I do my damndest to go to it." That goes for Central St Martin's School of Art and Design and Goldsmiths as well as the RCA. Then there is the New Designers exhibition, held each July at the Business Design Centre in Islington, where graduates of out-of-London colleges display their work. Her discoveries there have led her on a trail to textile studios in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Another, unglamorous source of talent is the Crafts Council's illustrated index of craftspeople. Ms Blackburn discovered Fred Baier in it.

She describes most of her finds in the forthcoming selling exhibition as "wild cards". They include the ceramicist Julia Schrader (teddy with porcelain spikes), Nina Leck (metal handbags), Emily Bates (textiles with human hair) and Jo Gordon (outrageous hats).

"I don't buy safe things," she says. "Safe is boring."

But in today's market, isn't it often the wildest-looking things that are the safest buys?

"I don't buy for investment," she insists, "I buy because I love the work. But if you have a good eye and a confident taste and buy what you like, you've got a good chance of picking winners."

That's more like it.

Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 8080). Some of the artists' work can be seen at the Crafts Council exhibition 'Objects of Our Time', until 16 February, at 44a Pentonville Road, Islington, London N1 (0171-278 7700).

Fantasy book league

The winner of the £150-worth of books from The Folio Society will be announced next weekend. The challenge: to name the best books of the last fifty years. Is this the line up which will coincide closest to the top ten nominated by literary editor Boyd Tonkin?

1984, George Orwell. Schindler's Ark, Thomas Keneally. History of Western Philosophy, Bertrand Russell. The Heart of the Matter, Graham Greene. Collected Poems, Philip Larkin. Collected Poems, Seamus Healey. Lord of the Flies, William Golding. The Story of Art, Ernest Gombrich. The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway. Dr Zhivago, Boris Pasternak. (From Barbara Brown, Stroud, Glos)

Find out next Saturday.

The article on railway station shopping last week was written by Sarah Lonsdale, not Charlotte Packer as we attributed. Apologies to all concerned.

In the thesaurus of daft adjectives used to promote the humble car, none is less appropriate or more overused than "exciting". Cars, or at least the vast majority of them, should never be exciting. They are meant to reassure and protect, not excite: to lower our heartbeat, not raise it.

Many car makers crow about "building excitement" and such rubbish, among them Toyota. Japan's biggest maker (and taking both quality and cost into account, probably the world's most accomplished manufacturer of cars). People do not buy Toyotas to be excited. They buy them because they are good value and rarely let you down. They are anti-excitement cars. (After all, there is rarely a motoring event so exciting as being stranded on the hard shoulder of a motorway at peak hour.)

I have just been driving a Toyota Camry V6 automatic and it is, without doubt, one of the least exciting cars I have ever driven. It goes about its business quietly and



Gavin Green

I like big, anti-excitement cars. They cruise along in a lazy, carefree way, encouraging a similar driving manner. They are the perfect foil to a hard day's work

comfortably and completely fuss-free. Like the best big saloons, it is therapeutic rather than exciting to drive. Its anonymous looks are a boon: they help avoid the excitement of being stopped by the police.

I like big anti-excitement cars. They cruise along in a lazy, carefree way, encouraging a similar driving

manner. They are the perfect foil to a hard day's work. Who wants to climb aboard a five-speed GTi buzz box, when the alternative is a soft and supple automatic saloon that can wait you home: the motoring equivalent of a pipe and slippers in front of a fireplace while the butler brings a large scotch?

The best big, anti-excitement cars, in my experience, are Jaguars. (Rolls-Royces would be even better, were it not for the fact that everybody else on the road hates you, which tends to increase the excitement level.) Jags are relatively common, at least in London, and are big and untrussed and comfortable. You can feel your angst dissipate after a few miles. The sporty models, of course, are not so good. Jags are not sporty cars, no matter what the big alloy wheels and war paint and marketing bluff may suggest. Jags are big, soft saloons, or at least the best ones are.

Mercedes saloons are also good. My favourite is the old S-class, as favoured by politicians, plutocrats and peers. They are plush tanks, and all that protective armour tends to reduce excitement, because you know you will rarely be threatened.

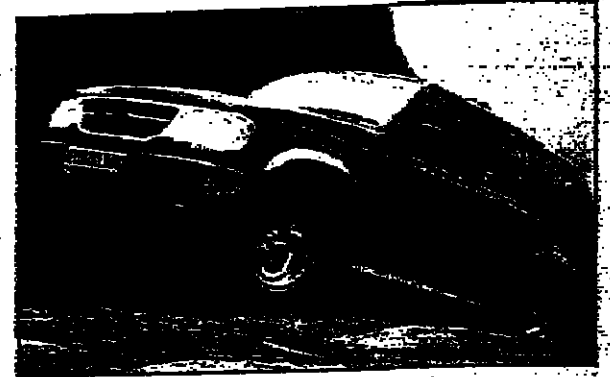
Other favourite anti-excitement tonies include the V6 Ford Scorpio (helped by its profound

ugliness and its surprising comfort), big Citroëns (because they ride with such suppleness and yet reassurance) and most large new American cars (rare in Europe). Off-roaders are too frenzied - they're too noisy and roll too much, although new Range Rovers are almost unexciting. BMWs are hopeless, even the big saloons. They're too sporty and thus about as therapeutic as a 10-mile jog. Volvos don't relax, either. Too many motorists abuse you, in anticipation of eventually being killed by you or a fellow Volvo driver. Most Japanese saloons are also poor. They are too energetic of ride and too buzzy of motor.

Which is why the Camry V6 was such a surprise. Quiet, refined, anonymous. I hardly remember a single journey I did in it, it was so relaxing. In fact, it was so unexciting I barely recollect the car at all. It merely served up entirely fuss-free transport, like a good, big saloon car should.

A bit of US excess

Roadtest: the Ford Explorer
By James May



Hardly anyone really goes off-roading in the UK. Yet there is now a steady market for such vehicles, and a healthy enthusiasm for the American "sport utility" interpretation of the genre. Consider the success of Jeep in the UK: unashamedly American cars are selling well.

In its Explorer, Ford has a ready-made response. Conversion to right-hand drive and a bit of gentle Europeanising - most significantly the switch from column to floor-mounted gear change - has been enough to modify a US best-seller for this market. And it remains obviously American: auto box only, a bit garish at the front, sitting on chromed wheels and kinda big all over.

In the States there is a V8 version; here we get a V6 heavily revised from a pushrod to overhead cam layout and delivering a healthy 206bhp. The gearbox is a five-speeder and the four-wheel drive hardware features a convincing, electronically controlled transfer box which automatically alters the torque split front-to-rear in its on-road setting. Should anyone want to venture into the mud, the off-roader can be locked to give a 50/50 split and high and low ratios. Even without a manual box and diff locks, it will tackle impressive terrain.

In its more natural road-going habitat, the Explorer is really quite impressive for a vehicle whose design requirements count against it. For an American car, the steering is refreshingly meaty, especially compared to the Jeep's - though the tall, weighty Explorer will still feel ponderous in fast bends. The engine is eager, if a bit noisy, and the auto-box shifts smoothly and intelligently, save for a reluctance to kick down from its

overdrive top. This is best switched out on windy roads.

The interior is even more of a relief for anyone familiar with crunchy, off-chromed American switchgear. It's big but toned in the best Ford tradition, and quite sober. The seats are very good indeed and rear accommodation is generous, but then it should be as this is a gigantic "car". Don't expect a limousine ride, though chunky tyres and the requirement for the suspension to cope with disused quarries and the like mean you will be gently pummelled.

In the role of a normal car the Explorer makes no more sense than any other big off-roader - which is not much, to be frank. But as a bit of American excess, it does nicely.

Specifications
Ford Explorer £25,375
SOHC 4.0-litre V6,
206bhp, five-speed
automatic gearbox. Top
speed 106mph, 0-60mph
10.9sec, average fuel
consumption 20.6mpg

Rivals
Jeep Grand Cherokee 4.0 Limited, £28,995
Even more obviously American than the Ford, the Cherokee has a slightly off-European interior. With its smaller Cherokee sibling, the trend-setter for "sport utes" (utility vehicles) in the UK. Mitsubishi Shogun 3.0 V6 5-door, £27,059

Land Rover Discovery 3.9 V8 S 5-door, £24,475
The British stalwart. Compared with the American approach, this reveals its utilitarian roots: boxy styling and something of a hose-down interior. The engine - of distant American origin, ironically - is gutsy; the Discovery excels at real off-roading.

All mod cons

Sticky Round drives Italjet's Formula 125

Forget Sting and The Who. In *Quadrophonia*, that cult Mods and Rockers movie released this week, the real stars are scooters. Yet far from simply presenting a nostalgic image of the Sixties, scooters are very much an urban vehicle of the Nineties. On a scooter you can be flash for comparatively little money - street cred and convenience, that's what it's all about.

In 1995 the Italians bought half a million new scooters. And the appeal is spreading: last year the British market grew by 40 per cent. The majority of these are hi-tech 50cc automatics, which are helping to dispel the image associated with the word "moped". However, they're only really suited to short journeys. What's needed, for car-brushing kids, is all that technology and flair combined with a bigger engine. And so the Bologna-based firm Italjet has come up with the Italjet Formula 125.

Scooter riding is all about being smug. A twist of the wrist at the traffic lights and you send all but the most determined car driver into the Formula's mirrors. Any cars that do get by are simply lost at the next tailback. If you are feeling brave, you can tap on the window and say "I bet your car is really fast between the jams, isn't it?" leaving the car driver humiliated by the half compliment. Then you simply filter to the front of the queue for another go.

Motive power, for this

delightful mockery of motoring, is a twin-cylinder 125cc two-stroke engine. The barrels are water cooled for reliability, and the belt-driven transmission is fully automatic for ease of use. Hit the electric start button, twist the throttle and you are off. Acceleration is a smooth, stepless advance of speed that geared machines of equal power can't keep up with. Engine vibration is reduced below that of many of the 50cc scooters, thanks to the well-balanced twin-cylinder layout.

Power output is 14hp, in accordance with new European laws for learner motorcycles. OK, so 14hp isn't much, but the automatic transmission makes the best use of it, with good acceleration and a top speed of just over 70mph.

What makes this machine so special - and its smaller brother, the Formula 50 - are its miraculous cycle parts. The Formula is the first scooter to use single-sided hub-centre steering. HCS is a way of separating steering and braking forces in order to prevent the front-end dive you experience on most two-wheelers when you brake hard. This system, previously only used in production on the Yamaha GTS and Bimota Tesi motorcycles, replaces conventional telescopic forks with a stiff swinging arm. The front wheel turns on a car-type steering knuckle.

Not only does the HCS system look superb on the Formula, but it really works, too,

which is a nice touch. Concealed inside the front wheel is a hydraulic disc brake, with another at the rear, both of which can be used heavily while still retaining the full front suspension that copes with bumps. The downside to this is slightly restricted steering movement, though this is only noticeable doing U-turns or in the thickest of traffic. Steering movement is still far more than you get on most motorcycles, which is why the nimble scooters - Formula 125 included - still have an advantage over heavy bikes in crowded city centres.

Outright handling and braking are about as good as you are going to get on such a light scooter. The disc brakes not only have enough power to stop in the space of a beer mat, but also retain the important "feel" needed when conditions are greasy.

Italjet, which also makes the Velocifero retro scooter, as owned by Oasis, is entering into only limited production of the Formula 125. So it looks as if you'll have to put your name down on a waiting list if you want to be king of the queue busters this summer.

The Formula 125 gets its official launch in Italy on 12 February. No UK price has yet been set, but it is expected to be around £3,000. The Formula 50 has the same chassis, but only a 50cc engine, and sells in the UK for £2,100. For more details contact the importer, Frontiers Motorcycles (0181-543 2508).



Sixties street cred: Leslie Ash, Phil Daniels and Lambretta in *Quadrophonia* (above). Nineties nerve: the Italjet Formula 125 (left)

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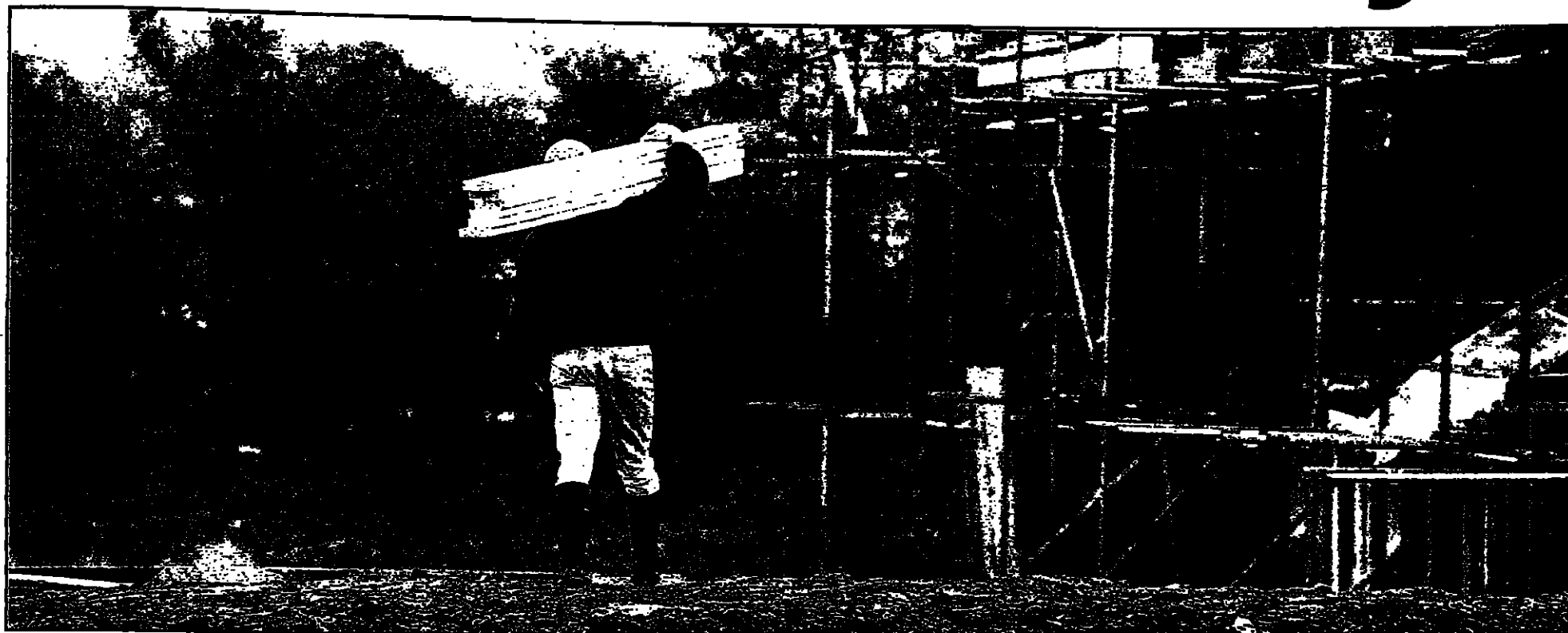
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In the current property climate, a builder's over-run schedule may well be shorter than the process of selling and then buying a new home

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTYN HAYHOW

Find more rooms to breathe

Calling in the builders may be a better option than moving. By Penny Jackson

It is difficult to know which is worse; the agonies of house-hunting, or living with the builders. Given that buying and selling at present are likely to take longer than even a builder's overrun schedule, it is not surprising that so many people are choosing to extend or convert, rather than move.

In the days when everybody was playing musical homes, it was a simple matter of waiting for a larger house down the street or in the next village to come on to the market. If a first choice was lost, there would be another close on its heels. Now, though, the months tick by with nothing on the horizon, and all the while prices are creeping up.

The arrival of the builders this week at Sally Palmer's home in the village of Sonning Common near Reading marked the end of a fruitless house-hunt and the start of an extension. She and her husband had spent a year looking for a larger family house in the area. "We had several offers on our house, but there was nothing on the market. We were looking for an older, larger place, in the same school catchment area but a bit more rural."

Frustration began to shed a rosier

light on their rather unprepossessing Sixties home. "It's a concrete box built by the Home Office for prison governors, with a mean kitchen and a dining room you can't swing a cat in," says Mrs Palmer, listing the reasons why they wanted to move. "But because it is in a good location, backing on to woodland, with a big sitting room and a very large garden, it is worth spending money on to get the space we need." In a few months, the Palmers should be able to swing their three children in the kitchen and dining room, while the first floor will have sprouted a new bedroom and bathroom. "It would cost a huge amount more to buy a house with this kind of space. We are also getting exactly what we want," adds Sally Palmer.

In times of shortage, as in times of recession, the number of people adding space to their homes increases. Ben Sage, of Goldschmidt and Howard's Hampstead office, saw it happening during the clamour for property in the Eighties and during the recent recession. He also sees an overall trend for more living space and fewer bedrooms. But he warns of the dangers of not using an architect or surveyor,

Extensions: what the builders say

Take professional advice from an architect and/or a surveyor. Apply for planning permission, and make sure the plans are communicated to the authority. It is not to your advantage to have them pared down to such an extent that the conversion fails to meet your needs. Do not unbalance a small house with inappropriate extensions. Do not have work done if you simply want to move. It is not an investment. Get builders to provide a proper schedule and give regular reports on progress. Word of mouth is invaluable. Check out loft conversions/extensions by neighbours. If adding a conservatory as extra living space, make sure it is well insulated and can be used all year round.

particularly in the case of conservatories. "If it is properly integrated and can be used all year round, then it will add value to the house. But they can be a terrible headache. It must be well insulated if you are to avoid baking in

the summer, freezing in the winter, and problems of condensation."

In cities, burrowing up is the most obvious way to accommodate more of the family. Deborah and Anthony Brunero didn't want to move from London's leafy East Sheen, but with a small son and another baby on the way they did not have the space in their three-bedroom semi-detached home. "We had the loft converted and now have an entire new floor - a big bedroom, a bathroom and my office. The wonderful thing is that it means my son uses a bedroom as a playroom, so we are not tripping over toys downstairs," says Deborah Brunero. "It was hell while the work went on, and it took three times longer than it should have done, but now we don't have to move. We remortgaged for another £30,000 but that amount of money wouldn't have bought us a five-bedroom house."

Agents are always cautious about the value a conversion adds to a property, and it does depend on the prevailing trends of an area, and the dimensions of the house. In Parsons Green, west London, for instance, the Peterborough Estate is a parcel of streets in a popular conservation area where loft con-

versions are the rule rather than the exception. Robert Stewart, of Hampton's Fulham office, also sees an increasing number of basements being dug out - a messy job, often requiring underpinning - which can give a family a large playroom and utility room.

Mr Stewart recently valued an unchanged two-storey house, three-bedroomed in one of the popular streets at about £425,000, whereas transforming top and bottom would push it closer to £575,000. The cost of a conversion, he reckons, after redecoration, would not leave much change out of £100,000, but is clearly worth it. However, in the streets of Victorian terraces in Battersea, known as Little India, spending money on a loft conversion is a questionable enterprise. A two-and-a-half-bedroomed house with a through reception, small kitchen and tiny garden would be unbalanced by adding another floor and would be of little use to a family, whose living space would still be cramped. According to Hampton's, it would cost about £15,000 to convert the loft, and would not increase the saleability of the house. The best anyone can expect is to get that sum back.

Three of a kind with Agas



The Aga is blue, two-oven and oil-fired. The six-bedroom period house which comes with it is Clarence Court, in Congresbury, Somerset, 12 miles from Bristol. Dating from the 17th century but extended later, the house is five minutes' walk from the village centre and stands in its own gardens of two-thirds of an acre. For non-Aga days, there is also a Phillips white oven and hob in the 21ft kitchen. £300,000 through Savills (01225 444622).



Holly Cottage in Bourton-on-the-Hill, Gloucestershire, has a warm red Aga (gas-fired, two-oven) in its 17th, beamed kitchen. The Grade II listed four-bedroomed house is tucked down a no-through-road towards the edge of the village, but it's just two miles from the mainline station at Moreton-in-Marsh. A 30ft stone barn provides garaging and storage. The gardens are as notable for a fine wisteria as they are for holly. £248,000 through Hamptons (01386 852205).



Little Mariteau House in Winchelsea, East Sussex sports a green, electric two-oven Aga in the kitchen, with matching green Shaker-style painted units. The Grade II listed Georgian-style period house has a marble-floored reception hall, a conservatory, three bedrooms and a 16ft drawing room with an open fireplace. There is a detached garage at the end of the 82ft garden. £180,000, through Phillips & Stubbs (01797 227338).

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For better or worse off

James Munro split everything 50/50 with his wife – three times

James Munro, 65, is an educational consultant

My biggest mistake

“In the early 1960s I founded a group of homes for children with multiple handicaps. It was then that I met my wife. We got married and I bought a house. We had two wonderful children, but by 1972 the marriage had broken down. It was entirely my fault and we split the property 50/50.

My wife and I were still in contact because of the children and after three years apart she suggested that we get back together. We got married again bought a big new house and had two more children.

In 1984, I was offered my first job as headmaster, but unfortunately it meant moving. My wife was half-way through a new training course, so we agreed that the best thing to do was to sell the house, split everything 50/50 again and buy two smaller properties. In the event I was given a flat to use at the school. After I moved, a paying-in book for a new bank account

came through the post. Apparently I was supposed to put money into it, but since the account was in the name of “Ms Munro”, I sent it back and said I didn’t know who this person was. It was only by chance that I later found out my wife had told the local authority she was separated. When she told me I wasn’t welcome back, I moved in with

my mother. It was around 1988 when I was invited to renew the relationship. The house was too small for all of us, so we bought a bigger one. But three years ago, shortly before our 25th anniversary, and apropos of nothing at all my wife handed me a note saying she was leaving. She had already rented another house. Inevitably she asked for a divorce, and both sets of lawyers

said that all our belongings should be divided 50/50 – again. Aside from that, the divorce went through fairly smoothly. I’m not bitter, just broke. I was a complete twerp for letting it happen to me three times. Last year she said she wanted to renew the relationship ‘at least on a friendly basis’... James Munro, not his real name, was talking to Corinne Simcock.

As I lay dying ...

Nic Cicutti reviews annuities for all seasons

First it was smokers, then it was faties. Earlier this week, the increasing fragmentation in the market for pension annuities gathered pace after one company offered a higher retirement income to potential clients – as long as they are dying, anyway. Stalwart Assurance announced it would enhance the annual retirement income paid to people suffering from cancer, kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, strokes, heart attacks, chronic asthma and diabetes.

Its offer expands on its previous target audiences – smokers – who were promised higher annuity rates when they retired, on the grounds that they are likely to die sooner than their non-addicted counterparts. The success of this policy allowed it to be offered to overweight people, also classed as a significant health risk, as long as they were more than 25 per cent over “normal” body weight.

Experts on this field fully support Stalwart’s initiative. Peter Quinton, who runs the Annuity Bureau, a company specialising in finding retirement planning, says: “What was viewed by some as a gimmick has remained one of the most competitive rates on the market and a worthwhile option for many long-term smokers.”

In effect, by paying them the same as those in good health Stalwart will no longer penalise those who die early. Stalwart’s shrewd marketing ploy also raises the question of how people ensure the best possible pension on retirement. Annuities provide that mechanism for many millions of people, whether members of so-called money-purchase company pension schemes or with personal pension plans. In either case, contributions made into their schemes throughout their working lives are invested to produce a lump sum. On retirement, the lump sum buys an annual income, or annuity, for the rest of the pensioner’s life.

But this is not an issue purely for those on the verge of giving up work. Knowing how much income a lump sum will



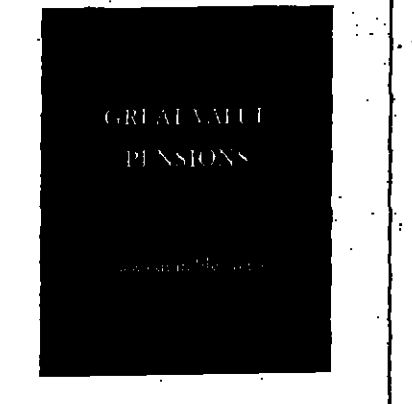
provide on retirement helps to determine the level of contribution into one’s existing pension. For some, it may also lay the ground for starting a pension in the first place. Annuities are broadly calculated on the basis of returns paid on long-dated gilts, or government bonds. At present, a lump sum of about £100,000 might buy someone aged 65 an income of about £11,000. The most important thing to remember is that annuities involve an actuarial gamble between ourselves and the companies we deal with – over our own mortality. The three key determinants in this gamble are age, sex and the health of the policyholder. The older one is when an annuity begins to be paid, the larger it will be. Someone hoping to retire at 55 instead of 65 might barely get £9,000 a year from a £100,000 lump sum.

A variety of whistles and bells can enhance certain aspects of retirement income – at the expense of the amount you receive. For example, altering the frequency of the income paid from annually to monthly can cost about 7 per cent of income. Probably of greater importance is the extent to which an

annuitant is prepared to ensure dependants are protected after their death. All of these options can have the effect of cutting retirement income to a fraction of what was originally hoped for. There are ways round this. One way is to protect income by buying a with-profits or unit-linked annuity with the lump sum. These annuities are a form of continuing investment, delivering immediate, but initially lower, income while allowing the underlying fund to grow and hopefully pay out more in years to come. With some companies you decide on how much income to take. One annuity from Equitable Life assumes an anticipated bonus of 6 per cent each year. If that target is achieved, payments remain level. Should bonuses rise beyond that, so does income.

Selecting the right annuity requires proper advice. Ensuring your future means setting aside enough so that when the time to buy the annuity comes, the best choices are not too painful.

Stalwart Assurance deals only through independent financial advisers. The Annuity Bureau: 0171 620 4090.



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First the good news

Rates lift for savers

Interest rates are on the up, clearly bad news for mortgage borrowers. But for millions of small savers, who have seen returns on their deposits decline in the past two years, there is at least one small silver lining.

In the past few weeks, banks and building societies have been steadily adjusting their accounts upwards.

Christine Bayliss, investment editor at *Moneyfacts*, the financial information provider, says: "Rates are definitely moving upwards, on average between 0.2 and 0.5 per cent. What we have found is two main areas of competition. The first is over instant access postal accounts, with several new accounts opening."

"The second is in the market for short-term fixed rates. These have been very popular, with several closing early after taking all the money they need to."

Among those to have withdrawn their products are Nationwide, Derbyshire and Newcastle building societies.

Rises detailed by *Moneyfacts* in the past month include Alliance & Leicester which shifted its Instant Direct account from 5.9 to 6.06 per cent on deposits over £10,000. Bristol & West raised its Postal Direct account from 6 to 6.4 per cent for the same deposit.

New postal accounts being launched include Melton Mowbray, offering 5.75 per cent on accounts of £10,000, Northern Rock's Select Instant paying 6.35 per cent for the same amount and Stroud & Swindon, offering 5.75 per cent.

Short-term rates in high demand include a new Bristol & West offering at 6.75 per cent to May 1 1998; Cheshire, which promises 7 per cent on deposits over £25,000 and Prudential Banking offering 7.05 per cent over 16 months on deposits above £10,000.

Norwich and Peterborough is still offering 6.75 per cent on deposits of £5,000, pegged for one year.

Nic Cicutt



New Mortgage Interest Rates

From 1 February 1997, Dunfermline Building Society's new variable mortgage rate for owner-occupiers will be 6.99% pa gross.

Notice to Existing Borrowers

From 1 February 1997, the Society's variable rates of interest for existing borrowers will be increased by 0.25% pa gross. For borrowers who have a fixed rate mortgage, this change will come into effect on completion of the fixed period.

Borrowers on the budget repayment scheme are not required to take any action at this time and individual notices will be issued to borrowers outwith the scheme.

Dunfermline Building Society Caledonia House
Carnegie Avenue Dunfermline KY11 5PJ Tel 01383 627727

Best borrowing rates

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
MORTGAGES					
Fixed rates					
Coventry BS	0800 126125	4.90 to 1/1/99	85	£250 —	To 1/1/02: 6mths interest
West Bromwich BS	0800 525 7070	6.55 to 1/11/99	85	£250 £300 cash rebate	1st 6 yrs: 6% of advance
Bristol & West BS	0800 119955	6.99 to 1/1/01	90	£275 —	To 31/12/01: 6 mths interest
Variable rates					
Hinckley & Rugby	0800 774499	4.15% for 2 years	80	£250 Free valm	1st 5 yrs: disc red'd
Mercantile BS	0191 295 9500	4.99% for 3 years	90	—	1st 6 yrs: 5% of advance
Nottingham BS	0151 948 1444	5.84% for 5 years	70	— £200 cash rebate	1st 5 yrs: rebate & disc red'd
First time buyers fixed rates					
Lambeth BS	0800 225221	5.20 to 1/3/99	95	£295 —	1st 5 yrs: 6 mths interest
FirstMortgage	0800 080068	6.35 to 1/4/00	90	£295 —	To 1/4/03: 6% of o/s balance
Bristol & West BS	0800 119955	7.48 to 1/1/02	90	£275 —	To 31/12/02: 6mths interest
First time buyers variable rates					
Staffordshire BS	01902 317317	2.23 to 1/3/98	90	— —	1st 5 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
Greenwich BS	0181 858 8212	4.19% for 2 years	95	—	1st 5 yrs: discount reclaimed
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	5.74% to 1/3/02	95	£295 Refund valm fee	1st 7 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
PERSONAL LOANS					
Telephone	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)		
Unsecured					
Northern Rock BS	0345 421421	12.9H	With insurance	£112.66	£102.59
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121125	14.0	Without insurance	£114.78	£101.45
Nationwide BS	via local branch	14.9		£113.15	£102.49
Secured (second charge)					
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.8	Neg	£3K - £15K	Term
Royal B of Scotland	0131 523 7023	9.0	70%	£2.5K-£100K	6 mths to 25 years
First Direct	0345 100103	9.5	80%	£5K-neg	3 years to retirement
OVERDRAFTS					
Telephone	Account	% pm	APR	Unauthorised	APR
Standard					
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.84	10.5	21.8
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.75	9.5	22.0
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	26.5
CREDIT CARDS					
Telephone	Card type	Min. Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee
Standard					
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64N	7.90N
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	—	0.79N	9.90N
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	—	0.797N	9.90N
Gold cards					
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.79N	9.90N
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N
STORE CARDS					
Telephone	Payment by direct debit	% pm	APR	Payment by other methods	% pm
John Lewis	via store	1.39	18.0	1.39	18.0
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.8	1.97	26.3
Sears	via store	1.94	25.9	2.20	29.8

Telephone	Account	% pm	APR	Unauthorised	APR
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.84	10.5	21.8
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.75	9.5	22.0
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	26.5

Telephone	Card type	Min. Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period
Standard						
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64N	7.90N	nil
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	—	0.79N	9.90N	56 days
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	—	0.797N	9.90N	54 days
Gold cards						
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50	46 days
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.79N	9.90N	56 days
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N	46 days

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	% pm	APR	Payment by other methods	% pm
John Lewis	via store	1.39	18.0	1.39	18.0
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.8	1.97	26.3
Sears	via store	1.94	25.9	2.20	29.8

APR: Annualised percentage rate. B+C Buildings and Contents insurance LTV Loan to value. ASU: Accident, sickness and unemployment. E: Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years. H: Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged. N: Introductory rate for a limited period.

All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01892 500677 30 January 1997

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
INSTANT ACCESS					
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.70 Year
Bank of Scotland	0500 804804	Instant Access Savings	Instant	£5,000	5.13 Month
Bank of Scotland	0500 804804	Instant Access Savings	Instant	£10,000	5.60 Month
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75 Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Melton Mowbray BS	01664 480214	Post Direct	Postal	£1,000	5.50 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Select Instant	Postal	£5,000	6.35 Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.40 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Select Instant	Postal	£50,000	6.45 Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Chelsea BS	0800.132351	POST-Net 20	20 day P	£5,000	6.05 Year
First National BS	0500 505000	30 Day Notice	30 day P	£10,000	6.30 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Select 60	60 day P	£10,000	6.50 Year
Manchester BS	0161 833 8898	Jubilee	75 day	£25,000	6.75 Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Kleinwort Benson	0800 317477	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.20 Month
Investec Bank (UK)	0171 626 0879	HICA 5000	Instant	£5,000	5.25 Month
Halifax BS	01422 335333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.25 Year
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.50 Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 391497	Fixed Rate Bond	1 year	£5,000	6.75F Maturity
Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Year Plus Bond	1/5/98	£5,000	6.75F Maturity
Chelshire BS	0800 243278	One Year Plus Bond	30/6/98	£5,000	6.75F Maturity
Prudential Banking	0800 000222	Fixed Rate Savings	16 Month	£10,000	7.05F Maturity
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£8,575	7.50F Year
WestWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F Year
Investec Bank (UK)	0171 626 0879	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.20 Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£3,000	7.00 Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Sun Banking Corporation	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.50F Year
WestWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F Year
National Counties BS	01372 747771	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.20 Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£250	7.00 Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	Financial Assurance	1 year	£5,000	5.30FN Year
Financial Assurance	0181 207 9007	Financial Assurance	2 year	£3,000	5.90FN Year
Financial Assurance	0181 207 9007	Financial Assurance	3 years	£3,000	5.95FN Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	Financial Assurance	4 years	£20,000	6.30FN Year
Financial Assurance	0181 207 9007	Financial Assurance	5 years	£3,000	6.40FN Year
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS					
Norwich & Peterborough	00 350 76168	Nova Access	Instant	£25,000	6.30 Year
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore 30	30 day	£10,000	6.55 Year
Alliance & Leicester Int	01624 663566	Fixed Rate Bond	2 year	£10,000	7.10F Year
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Millennium Bond	1/1/00	£10,000	7.50F Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS					
Investment Accounts			1 month	£20	4.75 Year
				£500	5.25 Year
				£25,000	5.50 Year
				£2,000	6.00 Month
				£25,000	6.25 Month
				£100	6.65F Maturity
				£1,000	6.00F Year
				£20,000	6.25F Year
Pensioner's C'need Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00F Month	
NS Certificates (tax-free)	43rd issue	5 year	£100	5.35F Maturity	
	9th Index linked	5 year	£100	2.50-7pi	
Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75F Maturity	

P: post only. F: fixed rate. N: net rate. A: All withdrawals subject to 30 day loss of interest.

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01892 500677 30 January 1997

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To be – or not to be – in equities?

Each year, when BZW publishes its annual gilts/equity study, it makes the long-term case for investing in equities just about as plain as it can be done.

Over the period since 1991, it quantifies how consistently shares have outperformed the other main asset classes, gilts and cash.

The long-run annual return of 8.11 per cent in real terms comfortably exceeds the 1.87 per cent available on gilts and the 1.48 per cent annual return on cash. In both cases, over any four-year period, history suggests that there is more than a three-in-four chance that the stock market will produce a higher return than either cash or gilts.

Long-term investors, so the headlines report, are more than amply compensated for the extra risk they take on in the stock market.

So much is well known. But what makes the study most interesting, to my mind, are the secondary details that most often get overlooked when the results are reported each January.

First are BZW's observations about the overall level of the stock market. Drawing on a number of different valuation techniques, including the pioneering approach of the American financial economist Robert Shiller, BZW calculates a "fair value" band for where share

prices should be by historic standards, and then compares this with the actual level of the stock market.

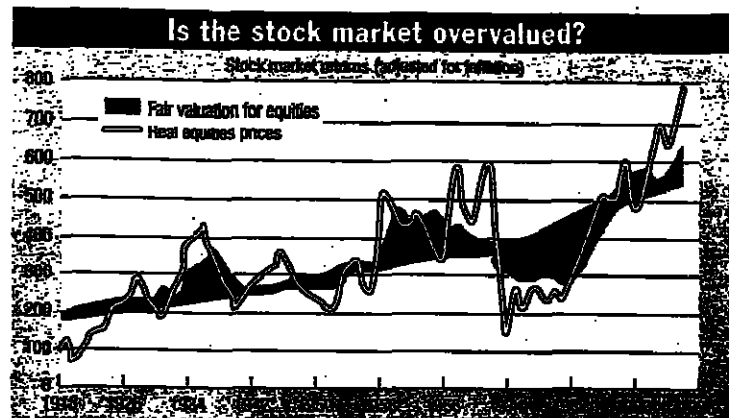
For at least five years now, the BZW study has been flagging up the fact that share prices today are way above their historic "fair value" range.

You thought this was a raging bull market? Well, you are right. In fact, as the chart shows, it is looking as highly valued now – after yet another strong year last year – than it has done in almost any previous period, including the so-called golden age of the 1950s.

According to BZW, the current bull market phase, from 1982 to the present, has not only produced consistently higher returns (an average of over 12 per cent a year in real terms, more than 50 per cent above the long-run average) but done so with lower risk than in the past (measuring risk by the standard academic measure of volatility of returns).

Michael Hughes, head of economics at BZW, quite rightly observes that just because a stock market is overvalued on a long-term basis does not mean it is going to stop going up next year. It takes time for bull and bear market phases to work through their cycles.

It is the direction, not the absolute level of the market, which matters



most. It so happens that the prevailing conditions since the early 1980s – falling real interest rates, steady economic growth and declining inflationary expectations – have been unduly favourable not just to shares but to almost all types of investment, including gilts.

Real returns on gilts have also been higher since the early 1980s than in any previous period, with the single exception of the between-war years. That, of course, was a period when inflation was negative for part of the time (which greatly favoured any fixed-interest investment such as gilts).

It also pre-dated the start of the great "cult of the equity", the post-

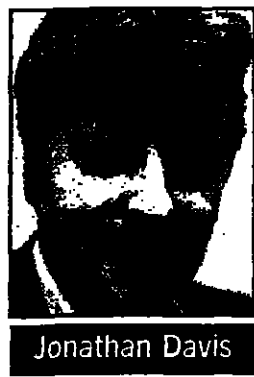
war realisation by pension funds and other investment institutions that, in an inflationary world, equities were not only a – but the most – suitable investment for organisations with long-term liabilities to meet.

The old stock market saying, "Let the trend be your friend," is therefore still very much in force. It is perfectly consistent to say that the stock market is overvalued and cannot continue this way for ever, while at the same time acknowledging that it may indeed go on doing well until there is a fundamental change in the direction of interest rates, the economy or inflation expectations. It may well be (as I am inclined to suspect) that we are still some way away from

the absolute bottom of the long-term interest rate cycle, notwithstanding the likely increase in short-term UK rates next year.

The BZW study is just as interesting – but less convincing – when it moves on to analysing risk and optimal portfolio mixes. If you accept that standard deviation is a good measure of risk, then the case against gilts and in favour of equities is clear-cut. The historical data shows that the stock market has generally been one-and-a-half times more volatile than gilts, and three-and-a-half times more volatile than the returns from cash. As the returns from shares are anywhere between three and six times as great as those on gilts, the case for filling your portfolio with equities is overwhelming in a statistical sense – the extra risk is amply compensated.

But this is where I think the BZW analysis starts to go off the rails, on the standard "garbage in, garbage out" principle. Standard deviation is one measure of risk, but it is not one that accurately captures the full dimensions of what risk means to most real-world investors. In practice, the risk of losing money, which is what many investors ultimately care about, from gilts during the recent phase in the level of long-term interest rates has been very small indeed.



Jonathan Davis

'You thought this was a raging bull market? You are right. It is looking as highly valued now than it has done in almost any previous period'

Credit cards that lead you on

Read the small print before you switch companies, warns John Andrew

There is a war going on – the nation's credit card companies are fighting among themselves to gain each other's customers. Cardholders are being bombarded with direct mail, while advertisements leap out from the pages of magazines and papers. To tempt a change of allegiance in the plastic war, there are offers of low interest rates and the promise of saving pounds. It all sounds so tempting.

One of the tactics used to wean us away from our usual cards is low interest rates for an introductory period. The marketing infantry calls these "teasers". The casual reader could be forgiven for thinking this rate applies all the time, but the teasers only apply for a matter of

months and sometimes only to balances transferred from rival cards.

Now, there is nothing wrong with introductory offers. Malcolm Coles, senior researcher at consumer magazine *Which?*, says: "Teaser rates can be a useful way of keeping down the cost of borrowing on your credit card."

However, he warns: "Watch out for inertia. Once the teaser period is up, you'll be switched to the normal rate which can be much higher."

Take the Co-operative Bank's advertisement for its Visa card: UK's lowest balance transfer rate. Transfer your balance for 7.9 per cent APR guaranteed until July '97. The 7.9 per cent is in type one-quarter inch thick and one-and-a-

half inches high. The copy states this means you could save up to £150, but in July the rate will increase to 19.5 APR for the remaining balance transferred. Then there is the throw-away line, "The rate for new card purchases is 21.7 per cent APR", which appears in type one-twelfth of an inch high. Whisk out a magnifying glass and you will discover in the small print that the saving is based on transferring £3,000 from a Barclays Visa on the assumption that the balance remains constant.

If the Co-op's offer is not all that it seems, some people who take advantage of a card issued by People's Bank could be in for another shock. Its direct mail describes it as a "no-nonsense card that offers the

flexibility and control of other credit cards", but there is no annual fee and the current APR is just 14.4 per cent. This about a third less than other cards. So what's the catch?

The terms and conditions reveal that if the credit limit is exceeded on any statement, there is a £10 charge. If the minimum payment is not received by the due date, there is a £10 charge and if a card is lost or stolen, there is a £10 charge.

Ron Urquhart, managing director of People's Bank in the UK, says: "To maintain our best-value approach we took the decision to impose a charge on those few who don't meet their minimum monthly payments."

Other issuers which penalise cardholders with ancillary charges are

MBNA International and NatWest. So, if you occasionally stray over your limit or fail to meet a payment deadline, it is essential to read the small print.

Credit cards were not designed for permanent debt. Perhaps the best move for those with a permanent debt on their credit card is to take out a personal loan over two years, pay off their credit card and then operate their finances on a "no credit" basis. This means paying off their credit card in full each month.

John Andrew is compliance manager at Midland Bank. He writes in a personal capacity. The Independent will investigate Midland's card charges in a separate piece.

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PRUDENTIAL

Sid burns his fingers

Dido Sandler looks at the prospects for British Gas



In a trough: Cedric the pig focused attention on the 'fat cat' salary of Cedric Brown, former BG chief executive

PHOTOGRAPH: EMMA CATTALL

If someone ever found Sid, the character everyone was meant to be looking for when British Gas was privatised, it is doubtful whether he is grateful to have been detected.

In all likelihood he is among the more than 1.75 million small investors still holding British Gas shares. But according to experts, anyone holding BG shares before the company's demerger later this month could be left with a bloody nose.

The warning compounds investor misery following British Gas's dreadful performance in the past few years. Since privatisation the stock has underperformed the Footsie 100 share index by 33.5 per cent. The recent dispute with the industry regulator over price cuts for the pipeline network, now being investigated by the Monopolies Commission, has knocked the share price by more than 25 per cent.

Yet on 12 February shareholders will convene in Birmingham to vote on the demerger of British Gas plc into two separate companies, Centrica and BG plc.

Centrica will run the UK gas supply, showrooms and service side, and control the vast and valuable Morecambe Bay gas fields. BG will comprise the heavily regulated pipeline business Transco, as well as interna-

tomiser base. Managed decline is the name of the game.

So that's the Centrica side of the equation. At BG, meanwhile, the MMC inquiry could see the company's revenues hit from April by as much as £400m a year, as domestic gas bills fall by around £30, if Ofgas gets its way. Centrica has already said it cannot foresee when it will pay a dividend. BG, owner of the lucrative pipeline network, should be the cash cow. But its dividend policy is almost entirely in the hands of the MMC. If it comes off badly, so will investors.

But analysts say the effect in the short- to medium-term of unresolved issues will mean, at best, share instability and slashed dividends. At worst, shares could be in for a hammering.

While shares have delivered well recently, up to 217p yesterday morning compared with 135p in 1986, investors could do better by taking their money elsewhere.

Anthea Gaukroger, investment analyst in the private client department of brokers Greig Middleton, is advising clients to sell their British Gas stocks immediately. "I don't think either of the two parts of the split company will be particularly attractive."

Although prices will be set by the market, and will only be known when trading commences on 17 February, Greig Middleton predicts Centrica will be priced at 45p-55p, and BG will be sold at 165p-175p. Alan Marshall, director of energy research at Robert Fleming Securities, believes BG shares will fetch just 130p, and Centrica 50p-60p.

So is it all doom and gloom? One theory is that if private investors were able to wait out 18 months, they might see Centrica's shares rise back to 100p. Should the MMC's April decision turn out more benign than expected, or if overseas explorations fared well, BG shares may also go up. Another city analyst, who wishes to remain nameless, says he has told his 60-year-old father to hold his shares. He says: "British Gas has been such an awful investment to date, it's not likely to get worse."

He adds that whereas with other utility stocks, investors can simply lock share certificates in a drawer and wait for the dividend cheques, punters with BG and Centrica shares need to be more vigilant, with 14 April, when the MMC inquiry reports, as the key date to look out for. Sid, meanwhile, wishes he could simply fade away.

Dido Sandler writes for Financial Adviser

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	£25,000 - £49,999		5.60%	4.48%
	£10,000 - £24,999		5.20%	4.16%
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	£100,000+		5.05%	4.04%
	£50,000 - £99,999		4.85%	3.88%
	£25,000 - £49,999		4.45%	3.56%
	£10,000 - £24,999		3.95%	3.16%
	£5,000 - £9,999		3.55%	2.84%
	£500 - £4,999		3.05%	2.44%
Dunfermline Gold				
	£25,000+		3.70%	2.96%
	£10,000 - £24,999		3.40%	2.72%
	£5,000 - £9,999		3.15%	2.52%
	£2,500 - £4,999		2.90%	2.32%
	£500 - £2,499		2.65%	2.12%
	£100 - £499		0.50%	0.40%
HeadStart Account				
	£1 or more		2.70%	2.16%
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	£25,000 - £49,999		6.25%	5.00%
	£10,000 - £24,999		5.95%	4.76%
	£5,000 - £9,999		5.25%	4.20%
	£2,000 - £4,999		4.35%	3.48%
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The rates of interest payable on Gold Deposits, Scotgold Accounts, Treasurers Deposits and Special Deposits for Charities and Exempt Pension Funds will be in accordance with the tiers and rates shown above for Dunfermline Gold, except for balances in excess of £50,000 where the rate will be 4.25% gross p.a.

Details of the rates of interest applicable to all other investment accounts including closed issues are available from any branch office.

TAX ARRANGEMENTS
Interest payable on or after 6 April 1996 will be paid or credited after deduction of income tax at the lower rate of 20% or, subject to the required certification, gross. Where the tax deducted exceeds an investor's tax liability (if any), a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. For details and a registration form for payment of interest gross, please see Inland Revenue leaflet IR110 or call in to your local branch office. *The net rates quoted are for illustrative purposes assuming relevant rate of tax being 20%.

For further information on the Society's investment services write to the Society at the address below or call in to any branch office.

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Knowing the form is everything

In the first of a series on tax, John Whiting explains how codings work

Taxpayers who have tax deducted at source under the PAYE system - and that includes 22 million or so of us - are starting to receive notification of their tax code for the 1997/98 tax year.

These innocuous-looking documents (summaries also go to employers) determine how much disappears from pay packets into the pockets of the Inland Revenue. Codings are essentially a guess based on the information the Revenue has from the year before and some sources have put the number of incorrect codings as high as 80 per cent.

This can lead to underpaying, or overpaying, tax during the year. So what is this notice that you've just received and no doubt instinctively put at the back of a drawer?

One side of the coding notice will be marked "tax allowances" and calculates your total tax-free allowances. The two most frequent allowances shown will be the personal allowance (to which everyone is entitled) and the married couple's allowance.

Under self-assessment, to be introduced in April, the Revenue is trying to make tax codings more comprehensive, so this section may also include personal pension relief or loan interest for those people who do not receive tax relief under Miras. Some employment expenses not reimbursed by your employer may also be shown here as an allowance. Any other allowances shown here are likely to be self-explanatory and you will be aware if they are applicable to you.

The other side of the form will be headed "Amounts Taken Away". Most importantly, this section covers the benefits you receive from your employer. Car and fuel benefit calculations are shown in the Inland Revenue guide which accompanies the tax coding.

The two sections are set against each other, which will produce a positive or a negative figure. If, for example, in 1997/98 a single person has benefits in kind of £1,000 this will be deducted from the personal allowance of £4,045 leaving allowances of £3,045.

The figures in the code will therefore be 304 (as in the first three numbers in £3,045), which will then be followed by a letter (either L, H, P or V). Usually the letter is L, which means the single allowance only; H links to

the married allowance; P to pensions. Things start to get confusing with restrictions which hit the amounts taken away. The Revenue will restrict some of the allowances, such as married couple's allowance, as relief is only given at 15 per cent. The restriction in your coding recovers excessive relief and is the difference between your top rate of tax and 15 per cent.

The state pension is also included in this section. In addition, the Revenue is incorporating items of untaxed income, such as property income and untaxed interest, into this section.

Putting all this together, and throwing in benefits from the employer, it can mean that the amounts taken away are bigger than the allowances. Going back to the earlier example, if benefits and restrictions amounted to £6,000, that exceeds the personal allowance by £1,955.

This is dealt with by the K code system: the taxpayer would get a code of K194, from the first three figures of the negative amount reduced by 1.

As noted earlier, many tax codes are wrong. The most frequent instances of a tax coding being incorrect come when there has been a change in your personal or financial circumstances - you've got married, you receive a company car (or give it up), you buy a new property and rent it out.

These are the times when it is most important to check your coding notice, as the amount of tax deducted will be going wrong. This could be good or bad news; either way you should know about it.

It is tempting to ignore an underpayment, but do bear in mind that the Revenue will catch up in due course. As for an overpayment - as most people don't complete a tax return at the end of the year, you might never get it back unless you look at your code.

If you believe your notice of coding is wrong you should contact the issuing office. The phone number is on the notice. A revised notice of coding will be sent to you and your employer.

It is a surprisingly simple procedure and one that could save difficulties when the end of the year arrives and you realise that you forgot to include the Inland Revenue in the list of people to tell about your marriage.

John Whiting is a tax partner at Price Waterhouse.



loose change

CaterDeal, part of Cater Allen, the stockbrokers, is setting up a "bed and breakfast" hotline for investors who want to minimise capital gains liabilities by selling shares and buying them back on either side of the 5 April tax year. Commission rates are £24, plus official charges. Call 01708 738555.

trust PEP that invests in a range of 11 underlying investment trusts. Initial charges are £30 plus VAT, waived until the end of April 1997, plus an annual management fee of 0.5 per cent. Minimum lump sum investments are £250, or £30 monthly. Call 0800 838993 for details.

Edinburgh Fund Managers is launching an investment insurance policy, offering four levels of medical cover, based on a choice of hospital and excess options. The plan is jointly arranged with Guardian Health, a subsidiary of Guardian Royal Exchange. Call 0800 455565.

Gartmore, the fund manager, is scrapping initial charges into its range of investment trusts. Annual management charges will vary depending on the fund. Minimum monthly contributions are £100, or £1,500 for a lump sum.

Perpetual is launching an off-shore roll-up Income Accumulator fund, investing in bond and money markets. Income is reinvested gross. The fund is Jersey-based so that tax is only payable on encashment. The minimum contribution is £1,500. There is a 3.25 per cent initial charge on bond funds, but none on the money market funds. Annual charges are 1 per cent. Call 01534 68448 for more details.

The Association of Investment Trust Companies is offering a free consumer fact sheet for savers considering the trusts for pension planning. Copies available by calling 0171 431 5222.

25 من الالمان

Nic Cicutti weighs up the pros and cons of Abbey National's offer

If it is so successful, why all the fuss?
The problem for ScotAm is that it is not as successful as its glossy brochures would like us to believe. In the past few years its performance has slipped in the league tables of life companies. The charts on this page give an idea. Once upon a time ScotAm was in the top five or six life offices in terms of its payouts to policyholders; in the past year or so it

Flashback: Captain Chaos appeared in ScotAm television advertising a few years ago

The company thought it had hit

What do policyholders get out of it?
Well, they would get an immedi-

These figures are a bit suspect in that the £1,500 related to an actual maturity value in April of about £210,000 and few of us have policies

He is Captain Chaos, a Sixties character dredged up by ScotAm for its last television campaign four or five years ago.

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Frills and spills

Collect to invest: John Windsor on whether to buy a Di

Thinking of bidding for one of Princess Di's old dresses? You must be mad, or at least prone to hysteria – the communal disease that grips audiences at celebrity cast-off sales.

Remember the Jackie Onassis sale at Sotheby's New York last spring? It fetched £22.8m, nearly eight times estimate. So thoroughly did people, and money, get carried away that Sotheby's, in a shrewd public relations move, agreed to release from contract buyers who had bid silly prices, then woken up screaming the morning after. And prices were silly: Jackie's fake pearls, with a pre-sale estimate of \$500-\$700, went for a dizzy \$211,500.

Bidders may get steamed up as they compete against one another but auctioneers remain coldly calculating. They know the value of provenance – that is, the added value that lies not in the object itself but in its vendor – whether it is an Old Master that has been cared for by the same duke's family for seven generations or a pair of pink ballet slippers worn by Rudolf Nureyev: £12,075 at Christie's, London 1995. As the hammer fell, sobs were heard from an unsuccessful woman bidder.

The fact is, the big auctioneers have never – well, almost never – had a celeb cast-off sale that has flopped. The Onassis, Nureyev, Elton John, Barbra Streisand, Frank Sinatra, Joan Sutherland and Michael Caine sales have all been sprinkled with stardust. So the publicity hype goes on. But post-sale, in the cold light of day, the stardust loses its glitter. Speculators beware: you are unlikely to profit from celeb sales, at least in this lifetime.

Only the Britt Ekland collection (Christie's South Kensington last December) – although it sold 92 per cent of its lots, raising £89,631, more than double the published pre-sale estimate – failed to achieve the lift-off into hysteria that is the auctioneer's dream. Typical of the bidding: a modest £632, just within £600-£800 estimate, for Ekland's Zandra Rhodes smock and trousers, a little short on glitter.

Well, how popular is Britt Ekland? How many remember her? That does matter to an auctioneer trying to warm up a saleroom full of hesitant first-time bidders. Come to that, how popular is a cast-off Royal among either Brits or the Americans who will be joining the bidding? Celeb sales are barometers of popularity. Fans demonstrate their



Fit for a queen: But are they likely to fit potential buyers?

devotion by throwing money. Is Princess Di's Celeb Quotient worth £3m, £1m, or £10m, in exchange for 65 chic confections of fabric? And would the wives and mistresses of the American

rich really feel like a million dollars in her second-hand, out-of-date kit at a charity ball – especially if the dress were one of Bruce Oldfield's asymmetrical early Eighties efforts?

Fortunately for Princess Di, auctioneers have ways of making you bid. Apart from cooping you up in conditions resembling a laboratory experiment on aggression in rats, they lace the bait with silly expectations in the form of ridiculously low pre-sale estimates, published in the auction catalogue.

Such as the estimate on those paste pearls in the Onassis sale: did the auctioneers really expect them to raise as little as \$500? Of course not.

But they understand the greed and aggression that such "come-on" estimates provoke. A handful of greedy bidders, having failed to carry off the lot for a song, will angrily turn on one another, bidding the price through the roof.

Even smaller auctioneers are up to the silly estimates trick. In the sale of the late Peter Cushing's belongings at Phillips in July, the actor's famous Fellsworth green herring-bone deerstalker hat, worn in the role of Sherlock Holmes, was estimated at a piddling £30-£50.

"We're not really sure how strong his following is," said a Phillips auctioneer, all innocence. On the night, Cushing fans flocked and the deerstalker fetched £1,380.

The fact is, without a realistic upper estimate to hint at restraint, silly bidders can go on bidding like hungry rats compulsively pushing a lever. Even Old Master prices are cranked up this way – especially at country house sales, where gullible bargain hunters abound. A Van Dyck portrait with a copper-bottomed attribution but a silly estimate of £4,000-£6,000 fetched £133,500 at a Sotheby's country house sale in Suffolk in June – more than double its true value.

So when Christie's publishes its catalogue of Princess Di's dresses with estimates not much higher than their price new – £3,000-£12,000 – you will know what you are expected to do. Think twice before you do it.

If you must collect Royal costumes of a more intimate nature, why not go for a nice pair of Queen Victoria's knickers? She used to give them to her ladies of the bedchamber as perks (Victorian celeb value).

With their authentic VR monogram and crown, they crop up from time to time at auction, fetching £600 or so. Having met the six people who collect them, I can assure you that they bear no visible signs of hysteria.

What's up for auction

New at Bonhams: a complete run of *Nova*, the style magazine for "a new kind of woman", published 1965-75. The estimate is £500-£800. *Nova* wrote about the kind of thing you find these days only in *Cosmopolitan*, *Politics*, too.

From the front cover of one, showing a young woman in a trouser suit: "I have taken the pill. I have hoisted my skirts to my thighs, dropped them to my ankles, rebelled at university, abused the American Embassy, lived with two men, married one, earned my keep, kept my identity and, frankly... I'm lost."

More such Sixties retro in the same sale of design next Saturday (2pm), including a part set of cutlery by one of Britain's leading silversmiths, Professor Gerald Benney.

The sale is strong on unusual furniture. Most visible piece – the Canadian architect Frank Gehry's corrugated cardboard armchair and ottoman Little Beaver for Vitra Editions, 1986, an example of Gehry's foray into cheap, democratic furniture. He was shocked to find that his admirers found such products chic, driving up their price as collectables. So he stopped making them, driving the price even higher. This lot is estimated £5,000-£6,000.

A first for Sotheby's – a selling exhibition of contemporary decorative arts, from Thursday for a week (see Sotheby's Collector, p21). No bidding: price tags instead. The up-and-coming names in the exhibition have been chosen by Janice Blackburn, a private collector who used to work for the Saatchi Collection.

Victorian Valentine cards are at Christie's South Kensington, Thursday (2pm). Estimates from £60 to £300.

John Windsor

fear of finance



If Scottish Amicable policyholders succumb to the blandishments of Abbey National, which yesterday announced it is prepared to pay up to £1.4bn for the company, their decision will be down to two factors.

Let me declare an interest at the outset. I am one of the million-strong army of policyholders who will be considering my vote. As I see it, the first point to consider is ScotAm's performance. The plain fact is that over the past five years, the company's policyholders have been short-changed.

The tables we show in our Question and Answer piece on the Amicable tell the story. In that space of time, performance has slipped dramatically. The second factor is greed on the part of ScotAm's bosses. Having managed our funds in a shambolic way, the directors are in effect offering us bonuses of a few hundred pounds each, on average.

For that, we must hand over 20 per cent of future profits and lose any effective control of the company we supposedly own until it is floated in three to five years.

Yet far from apologising to us for their mismanagement of our funds, our "employees" (for that is what they are) have lined up share incentive packages that will give them up to £14.4m in shares if returns hit the targets they have set.

The justification for this to ScotAm bosses is that it is all part of creating the new "commercial culture" needed to drag a sleepy office, founded in 1826, into the 21st century.

In other words, the same directors who have been with the company for years – in some cases, decades – want loads of cash for pulling us out of the mire they put us into.

Despite the anger felt by policyholders, it would be wrong to fall into the arms of Abbey National until we know what they are proposing.

Details of the Abbey National offer, what little there is so far, are set out more fully in today's business pages.

More information will be known in the next few days. Next week, Scottish Amicable is hoping to mail out its own proposals to policyholders fleshing out its announcement two weeks ago.

Until the position becomes clearer, however, do not vote for ScotAm's proposals either.

Meanwhile, it strikes me, as it will no doubt have struck many thousands of other policyholders, that despite their new-found modernising zeal there is very little Scottish Amicable's directors have to learn in at least one area – how to put their snouts in the trough.

From one mutual company to an ex-mutual. Elsewhere on these pages, we detail the experience of a would-be borrower with Cheltenham & Gloucester, the mortgage arm of Lloyds Bank. C&G is allegedly able to offer lower rates because of the high number of people whose £495 arrangement fees are lost when they fail to complete on a purchase. There is an irony here, in that when C&G was bought by Lloyds, it promised to undercut other lenders' mortgages by at least 0.25 per cent. Earlier this week, it abandoned the pledge, raising loans to a mere 0.03 per cent shy of its main competitors. Those who are about to vote for their own societies to float on the stock market might want to bear this in mind.

Nic Cicutti

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صكرا من الرحمن



The Big Picture

Citizen Kane

1.40pm Sat BBC2

The 26-year-old Orson Welles' 1941 directorial debut sits at the top of so many greatest-movies-of-all-time lists that it is easy to forget what good fun it is - light, fast, scabrous and breathtakingly inventive. It is also one of those films that could not have been made by anyone else. Welles (above) is Charles Foster Kane (while Kane, as everybody knows, was William Randolph Hearst), whose rise and fall mirrored Welles's subsequent career in movieland.

Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend

by Gerard Gilbert

I'm hazarding a guess here, but I imagine that the one thing that most media-savvy, post-literate people know about Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* is that the film director David Lean spent the latter stages of his life plotting to bring it to the screen. Conrad's 1904 novel also fascinated the screenwriter Robert Bolt during the 1960s, but it has taken a combination of British, American, Italian and Spanish money to finally nail the beast. Moreover, given its multi-national funding and casting (from Colin Firth and Brian Dennehy to Claudia Cardinale), and the hugely ambitious nature of the book (the intellectual and political forces which distort individuals and nations), *Nostromo* (Sat BBC2) is remarkably coherent.

Visually, it's a treat. David Lean would probably have lost his characters in the Andean landscape, but director Alastair Reid keeps the right balance between man and nature - and there's a suitably lush score by Ennio Morricone. Colin Firth, looking muted and sexless minus a smouldering storyline and his Mr Darcy breeches, plays Goulden, the idealistic (so you know what's going to happen to him) owner of a dilapidated

silver mine in a fictional South American country. His father, the mine's previous owner, was killed by his workers during a nationalist revolution, and Firth is determined to make a success of it, despite the misgivings of Dr Momyham, a broken and sozzled colleague of his papa, played by Albert Finney.

Orson Welles, as far as we know, never wanted to make a movie out of *Nostromo*. He did, however, want to film *Moby Dick*, *Don Quixote* and *The Merchant of Venice*, according to the *TX* documentary, *The Lost Films of Orson Welles* (Sat BBC2). Welles did, in fact, complete shooting Shakespeare's Venetian tale, but the negatives mysteriously disappeared before they could be edited. Judging by what remains, his *Shylock* is a great loss to the canon of filmed Shakespeare. *The Other Side of the Wind*, his 1976 film starring John Huston and Peter Bogdanovich (and with enough rapid editing to make *NYPD Blue* seem like a still life) is completed but remains blocked by legal wrangles. A lot of the other stuff - taken out of storage for the first time since his death by Welles's long-term companion, Oja Kodar, is the cinematic equivalent of

doodling, the by-products of frustrated talent.

The first series of *Hill Street Blues* (Sat C4), Steven Bochco's innovative and fondly remembered 1980s ensemble police series, begins a rerun and looks as raw as you would expect. This was the beginning of a long experimentation with the genre which has now evolved into *NYPD Blue* and *Murder One*.

I was rather struck by the similarities between *An Audience with...* Bruce Forsyth (Sat ITV) (reminders and anecdotes with Larry, Kenny Lynch and co) and *Bravo on America* (Sun ITV), with its reminiscences and anecdotes from Jackie Collins, Tina Brown and David Hockney. In fact, they should have called this week's episode *Hollywood Melhyn*.

Howard Goodall's *Organ Works* (Sun C4) takes its tone from the schoolboy pun in its title. Goodall is an irrepressibly chirpy composer - he wrote the theme tunes for *Blackadder* and *Mr Bean* - and presenter, who lends an authority but largely successful populist touch to the story of organs and organ music, bouncing around from the Tyrol to Spain to an east London organ makers. The lad's gone and will go far.



The Big Match

Rugby: England v Scotland
2.25pm Sat BBC1

England's rugby union team gets to answer critics of their coach (Jack Rowell) and his alleged "mumbo-jumbo" tactics when they open their Five Nations account against Scotland in today's Calcutta Cup match at Twickenham. Captain Phil De Glanville's defence is to be tolerant of their ambition to kick points, but we could be forgiven for pointing to Wales's by-accident conquest of the Scots. English tries, though, are likely to come from Jason Leonard (above) and the pack.

Saturday television and radio

BBC 1

- 7.05 The Pink Panther Show (R) (253284).
- 7.25 News, Weather (6957212).
- 7.30 Children's BBC: Inzoud, 7.40 Phantom 2040, 8.05 The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest.
- 8.30 The New Adventures of Superman (3443888).
- 9.15 Live and Kicking. Order, order. Guests are Michelle Gayle and Betty Boothroyd, Speaker of the House of Commons (S) (71841468).
- 12.12 Weather (6729975).
- 12.15 Grandstand. Introduced by Steve Rider from Twickenham. 12.20 Football Focus (671807).
- 1.00 News (1468437). 1.00 Racing from Chesham. The 1.15 BBC Ceefax and Marcia Ann Cooper Handicap Chase (15323252). 1.25 Skiing: action from the World Cup women's downhill from Laax in Switzerland (92669333). 1.40 Racing from Chesham: the 1.45 Prestige Novices' Hurdle (98626791). 1.55 Rugby Union. 2.10 Racing from Chesham: the 2.15 John Hughes Grand National Trial (63865064). 2.25 Rugby Union. England v Scotland. Live coverage of the Calcutta Cup match from Twickenham. Kick-off at 3pm. See *The Big Match*, above (64379265). 4.40 Final Score (2345449). 5.00 Rugby Union: Wales v Ireland. Extensive highlights (5284).
- 5.30 News, Weather (7) (382245).
- 5.40 Regional News and Weather (697517).
- 5.45 The Simpsons (S) (7) (860449).
- 6.10 Due South (S) (870623).
- 6.55 Noel's House Party. The Bee Gees are the victims of this week's Gotcha (S) (655401).
- 7.50 The National Lottery Live (S) (7) (308265).
- 8.05 Casualty. Josh, who last week lost his entire family in a gas explosion, seeks solace from Baz (S) (7) (788536).
- 8.55 News, Sport, Weather (7) (264642).
- 9.15 *Midnight's Child* (Colin Bucksey 1992 US). Made-for-TV show starring Olivia D'Abbo as a Swedish air pilot from hell - literally so, as she picks out an LA couple's young daughter to be bride for the Devil. Yes, well... (S) (449994).
- 10.45 Match of the Day. Derby County v Liverpool is the main event - plus, all the rest of the day's Premiership goals (S) (7) (481406).
- 11.55 The Frank Skinner Show (R) (S) (7) (644008).
- 12.25 Top of the Pops (S) (7) (1921043).
- 12.55 *Shag* (Zelda Barnes 1989 UK/US). The title translates a little unfortunately into British English (Palace, who produced it, should have known better), but to Americans of a certain generation, allegedly, the shag was a dance craze. Set in 1963, Phoebe Cates is the lass who, on the eve of her wedding, heads off for one last spree on the beach with girlfriends Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah and Annabeth Gish. A strong young cast (7) (598734).
- 2.30 Weather (8233753). To 2.35am.
- REGIONS: NL 2.25 Rugby Union: Wales v Ireland. Wales: 2.25pm Rugby Union Wales v Ireland. 11.55 Snooker. 12.40am The Frank Skinner Show. 1.10 Top of the Pops. 1.40 Film: Shag.

BBC 2

- 6.20 Open University: Voyages of Discovery (6039913). 6.45 The Planet Earth: A Scientific Walkie Up in the Wild Room. 8.20 Gargoyles. 8.55 Masked Rider (1706159).
- 9.25 Scratchy and Co. Music comes from 91.1 and Skunk Anansie. Plus, gossip from last week's Brat Awards (S) (77175389).
- 11.30 The Chart Show (S) (37159).
- 12.30 Fresh. A profile of Talvin Singh, a young Anglo-Asian musician, DJ, record producer and club owner opens this new "contemporary arts-based series" (35623).
- 1.00 News, Weather (7) (14602913).
- 1.05 London Weekend Today (7) (14601284).
- 1.10 *Disaster on the Coastline* (Richard C Sarafian 1980 US). A vengeful railroad employee programmes a head-on collision for the computer controlled Los Angeles-San Francisco train service. Can he be stopped? Mechanically cranked suspense with Lloyd Bridges (95936062).
- 3.00 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081).
- 3.50 *seaQuest DSV*. The submarine is visited by aliens. Sounds like a TV series in trouble (7) (4636997).
- 4.45 News, Sports Results, Weather (7) (2339888).
- 5.05 London Weekend Tonight (7) (5613081).
- 5.20 *Cleopatra* (S) (187478).
- 5.50 *Salvina*, the Teenage Witch. Rap star Coolio makes a guest appearance, as Sabrina's cat goes missing on Christmas Eve (S) (7) (845130).
- 6.15 *Gladstones* - the Ashes Series (S) (7) (690371).
- 7.15 Blind Date. Last week's winners report back from Canada and France (S) (7) (696555).
- 8.15 Family Fortunes (S) (7) (526062).
- 8.45 News, Weather, Lottery Result (7) (246246).
- 9.00 An Audience with Bruce Forsyth. See preview, above (S) (7) (155).
- 10.00 *Tango and Cash* (Andrei Konchalovskiy 1989 US). Reluctantly teamed cops Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell try to out-macho each other when they pair up to nail the drugs baron (Jack Palance) who has framed them. Slick smash-bang-wallopp direction and nimble dialogue make a surprisingly enjoyable ride out of this otherwise clichéd buddy-luddy action movie (S) (220159).
- 11.55 In Bed with Meddler. Chummy comedian Bob Mills, whose new Channel 4 chat show starts tonight, continues his brawl through some of television's odder offerings (464064).
- 12.25 *Erik the Viking* (Terry Jones 1989 UK). Jones's adaptation of his children's book is an inventive but not particularly funny or exciting Norse saga that probably won't please either Python fans or their children. Tim Robbins, John Cleese and Imogen Stubbs star (S) (396043).
- 2.05 *Topical Heat* (S) (5109289).
- 2.55 *EL News Review* (2574192).
- 3.45 Club Nation (R) (2925550).
- 4.40 ITV Sport Classics. Frank Bruno takes on Joe Bugner from the archives (45837260).
- 5.05 *Cosch* (S) (3674114). To 2.55am.

ITV/London

- 6.00 GMTV. 6.00 News. 6.10 Mole in the Hole. 6.30 Professor Bubble. 6.50 Bug Alert! 7.10 Disney's Wake Up in the Wild Room. 8.20 Gargoyles. 8.55 Masked Rider (1706159).
- 9.25 Scratchy and Co. Music comes from 91.1 and Skunk Anansie. Plus, gossip from last week's Brat Awards (S) (77175389).
- 11.30 The Chart Show (S) (37159).
- 12.30 Fresh. A profile of Talvin Singh, a young Anglo-Asian musician, DJ, record producer and club owner opens this new "contemporary arts-based series" (35623).
- 1.00 News, Weather (7) (14602913).
- 1.05 London Weekend Today (7) (14601284).
- 1.10 *Disaster on the Coastline* (Richard C Sarafian 1980 US). A vengeful railroad employee programmes a head-on collision for the computer controlled Los Angeles-San Francisco train service. Can he be stopped? Mechanically cranked suspense with Lloyd Bridges (95936062).
- 3.00 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081).
- 3.50 *seaQuest DSV*. The submarine is visited by aliens. Sounds like a TV series in trouble (7) (4636997).
- 4.45 News, Sports Results, Weather (7) (2339888).
- 5.05 London Weekend Tonight (7) (5613081).
- 5.20 *Cleopatra* (S) (187478).
- 5.50 *Salvina*, the Teenage Witch. Rap star Coolio makes a guest appearance, as Sabrina's cat goes missing on Christmas Eve (S) (7) (845130).
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Channel 4

- 6.00 Sesame Street (R) (68623).
- 7.00 Dumb and Dumber (S) (26826).
- 7.30 Dennis (R) (2130517).
- 7.45 First Edition. With Jon Snow (R) (2128772).
- 8.00 Transworld Sport (23623).
- 9.00 Morning Line (S) (90710).
- 10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (12307).
- 11.00 Super Bowl XXXI. Highlights of last Sunday's clash between the New England Patriots and the Green Bay Packers (S) (6523159).
- 12.10 Tim Henman's Silver Service. Profile of the fast-rising British tennis star by Ian Wooldridge of the *Daily Mail* (7) (7393623).
- 12.40 Channel 4 Racing. Jim McGrath presents the 12.45, 1.20, 1.50 and 2.25 races at Sandown Park (S) (35450401).
- 2.45 The Summer Tree. A short film about an old man recalling his younger years (7) (3935401).
- 2.55 *Mr Deeds Goes to Town* (Frank Capra 1936 US). Gary Cooper charms as Longfellow Deeds, the small-town, greeting-card poet from New England who comes to New York and conquers its cynical big-city heart (along with that of Jean Arthur, the hickette sent to do a hatchet job on him). Quintessential Capra, but it strains at just over two hours (7) (8158375).
- 5.05 *Enchanted* (R) (S) (7) (8027246).
- 6.30 Right to Reply (S) (7) (8).
- 7.00 A Week in Politics (S) (3913).
- 8.00 *Frindle Kingdoms*. Visits south-western Italy where one of the oldest human settlements in the world is now home to a rare breed of kestrel (S) (7) (9333).
- 9.00 Last Chance Lottery (S) (9197).
- 10.00 Eurostar (R) (S) (31492).
- 10.30 The Show. A new chat show, hosted by Bob Mills, which incorporates not only the show itself, but all the shenanigans which surround it - agreeing on guests, getting them to do the show, getting other guests when guests drop out, getting guests to the studio, etc. - in a real life Larry Sanders Show, in other words - in fact in the words of the accompanying publicity material, *Larry Sanders* is hilarious. Will this be? (4828265).
- 11.35 *Hill Street Blues*. See preview, above (R) (S) (7) (64093).
- 12.35 TV Soap. Surfs into "The Love Channel", religious programme "Nativity Cross" and drag queen sensation and former Werhol associate Holly Woodlawn (S) (8398260).
- 1.20 The Little Show (R) (S) (5538550).
- 1.50 Ricki Lake. Robbie, an actor, thinks his wife has it easy in her job as a hairdresser. So Ricki arranges for them to swap jobs (R) (S) (7) (5983956).
- 2.35 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R) (S) (5700550).
- 3.05 *Bless This House* (R) (S) (62779821).
- 3.30 Film Night (R) (S) (29734).
- 4.00 The White Room. With Sting, Teenage Fanclub, Geno Washington, the Equals, Babylon Zoo, Supergrass and McAlmont (R) (S) (5386192).
- 4.55 The Best Specials (R) (S) (5780227). To 6.05am.

ITV/Regions

- ANGLIA
As London except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (55623). 1.10 Champions of the Future (249404). 1.40 Carlton (1172726). 2.00 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (1506975). 3.50 Baywatch (4636997). 11.50 Film: The Calendar Girl Murders (638333). 1.40 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 2.40 Film: In the Belly of the Whale (366444). 4.25 Sound Bites (95317260). 4.35 - 5.30 Funky Bunker (2023840).
- CENTRAL
As London except: 12.30 *Premiere* (35623). 1.10 *Champions of the Future* (249404). 1.40 Movies, Games and Videos (55623). 2.10 Film: You Need My Life (157826). 5.10 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 5.45 *Johnnie Walker* (790173). 5.20 - 5.30 *Asian Eye* (2067043).
- CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST
As London except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (55623). 1.10 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081). 2.05 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 2.10 Film: *Man About the House* (157826). 3.50 Baywatch (4636997). 5.10 *Full Time* (753352). 11.55 *Movie Show Special* - Die Hard with a Vengeance (234517). 12.30 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 12.45 In Bed with Meddler (550504). 1.15 Film: *Topaz* (8275192). 3.30 *Funny Business* (60569265). 3.55 *Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club* (6054547). 4.25 *Murder: She Wrote* (2658666). 5.15 - 5.30 Sound Bites (95317260).
- YORKSHIRE
As North East except: 5.10 *Scoreline* (753352).
- ITV WEST
As ITV Wales except: 1.10 Sportsweek (1689420). 1.45 *World of Wonder* (11726536). 2.05 Film: *Earth Star Voyager* (49987772). 4.15 The List (252975).
- MERIDIAN
As London except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (55623). 1.10 *Champions of the Future* (249404). 1.40 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 2.05 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (1506975). 3.50 Baywatch (4636997). 11.50 Film: The Calendar Girl Murders (638333). 1.40 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 2.40 Film: In the Belly of the Whale (366444). 4.25 Sound Bites (95317260). 4.35 - 5.30 Funky Bunker (2023840).
- WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (55623). 1.10 Film: *Mad About Men* (9594710). 2.55 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081). 11.50 Film: The Calendar Girl Murders (638333). 1.40 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 2.40 Film: In the Belly of the Whale (366444). 4.25 Sound Bites (95317260). 4.35 - 5.30 Funky Bunker (2023840).
- S4
As London except: 10.00 *Board Stupid* (88178). 10.30 *New Gamesweek* (11371). 12.10 *Alphawest* (R) (2914081). 12.30 *Cartoon Knowledge* (6262208). 12.40 *Swinger and Raging* (4599717). 2.30 *Rugby* (3989807). 6.30 *Swinger* (S) (29734). 12.00 *Neutron* (238772). 7.15 *Cartoon* (7130984). 8.20 *Top Gear* (238772). 9.15 *Cartoon* (7130984). 9.25 *Last Chance Lottery* (1840265). 10.30 The Show (70604). 11.30 *Brass Eye* (593265). 12.05 *Football* (1981802). 4.35 - 5.30 *Best Specials* (7142889).

Radio

Radio 1

9.16pm BBC FM
7.00am Cive Warren 10.00 Kevin Greening 1.00 Jo Whalley 4.00 John Peel 7.00 Dave Pearce Lovegrove Dance Party 9.00 Radio 1 Rap Show 12.00 The Radio 1 Reggae Dancehall Nite 2.00 Essential Mix - Marshall Jefferson 4.00-7.00am Charlie Jordan

Radio 2

9.16pm BBC FM
6.00am Mo Dutta 8.05 Brian Matthew 10.00 Steve Wright 1.00 Jeremy Clarkson's Laughing Gear 1.30 To the Manor Born 2.00 *Juni Spere* 4.00 Nick Barracough 5.00 Don Everly at 50 6.00 The Moody Blues in Concert 7.00 My Fair Lady (R) 10.00 Ian Anderson's Celtic Connections 97 12.05 *Charlie's* 4.00-7.00am Mo Dutta

Radio 3

9.16pm BBC FM
6.55am Weather, News Headlines. 7.00 Record Review. 9.00 Building a Library. Julian Budden compares available recordings of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. 11.15 Record Release. 12.00 Private Passions. Another chance to hear Michael Berkeley's interview with Canadian writer, historian and journalist Michael Ignatieff (R). 1.00 Theatre. 1.20 News: Vintage Years: the Philarmonia. Humphrey Burton traces the history of the Philharmonia. 3.20 The Flinching Touch. Tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson holds a masterclass on Mozart's operatic roles with students at the Britten-Pears School, assisted by vocal coach Diane Forlano. 4.05 The BBC Orchestra. Rachmaninov: Prince Rostislav. Stravinsky: Symphony in E flat. (R) 5.00 Jazz Record Requests. 5.45 Music Matters. Including a new piece for the violin; music of the court; and new ideas about Ockeghem. 6.30 Live from the Met. 1. punt. A tale of the English Civil War composed by a Sicilian living in Paris. Bellini's last opera is set in Plymouth Castle and deals with passionate jealousy and intrigue between the Royalists and the Puritans. Sung in Italian. 7.50 Interview. William Weaver talks about Bellini's *Puritani*. 8.15 1. punt. Act 2.

Radio 4

9.16pm BBC FM, 9.16pm DAB
6.00am News Briefing. 6.10 Farming Today. 6.50 Prayer for the Day. With James Whitcomb and guest. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Today. With John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor. 8.58 Weather. 9.00 News. 9.05 Sport on 4. With Cliff Morgan. 9.30 Breakfast. Holiday reports from around the world. 10.00 News. Loose Ends. Presented by Nad Sherrin. 11.00 News. The Week in Westminster. 11.30 *As Usual*. In the second of eight programmes, Juliet Peltier explores Alan Cusane and alternative medicine. 12.00 Money Box. Alison Mitchell with the latest news from the world of personal finance. 12.25 Just a Minute. From St Andrew's University. 12.55 Weather.



Choice

Sixty million Americans believe that the end of the world is nigh - the theological reasons for this and the political and social fall-out come under sustained scrutiny in a five-part series, *Apocalypse Now* and *Then* (10.05pm R3). Earlier, *Apocalypse Now* is remembered by Robert Duvall (left) in *Close-Ups* (6.50pm R4).

8.55 The Met Opera Quiz. A panel of three opera experts tackles questions sent in by listeners. 9.20 1. punt. Act 3. 10.05 *Apocalypse Now* and *Then*. Millions of fundamentalist Christians, many of them in America, believe that the biblical Book of Revelation refers to events in our own time. In the first of five programmes, Iwan Russell-Jones examines the theology behind the belief that we are living at the end of time. See Choice, above. 10.30 Impressions. Bryn Morf, looks at recent releases by pianists from Ireland and drummer Bobby Prevorse, and at a six-CD retrospective of pianist and composer Chick Corea. 12.30 First Base. The second of six programmes in which bassist Ray Brown talks to Alyn Shipton about his distinguished career. 1.00-7.00am Through the Night. With Donald Macleod.

1.00 News. 1.10 Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby chairs a discussion of issues raised in *Puntum*, London, with Sir Norman Fowler MP, Sir Alan Williams, Referendum Party, Simon Hughes MP, Liberal Democrat spokesman on health, and Glenda Jackson MP shadow Transport Minister. 1.55 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 News: Any Answers? (0171) 580 4444. 2.30 Playhouse: Dreams of Leaving. By Rob Gittins. In 1900, Wales was the land of milk and honey for many immigrants, particularly Irish. Ninety years later, it's a very different story. With Amanda Gordon and Suzanne Pearce. 4.00 News: That's History. Gerry Northam tests the reputation of ancient Greek civilization as a model for modern society. 4.30 Science Now. 5.00 File on 4. 5.40 Footnotes. The last programme of the series. 5.50 Shipping Forecast. 5.55 Weather. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.25 Week Ending. 6.50 *Close-Ups*. A new series in which Nigel Andrews meets Hollywood's leading players. Here he talks to Robert Duvall. See Choice, above. 7.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. Franz Schubert's great song cycle, *Winterreise*, evokes a mental journey of grief and loneliness. Many great artists have travelled this journey since, notably Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Brigitte Fassbender. On the bicentenary of Schubert's birth, they reflect on *Winterreise* as the composer's most revealing biography. 7.50 On These Days. 8.50 Saturday Night Theatre. Young PC. By Mark Davies. Mark Davies. A newly qualified police constable, is posted to her home town, to the disapproval of her boyfriend and other petty criminals. (R)

Radio 5

9.16pm BBC FM
6.00am Dirty Tackle 6.30 Brian Hayes at Breakfast 9.00 Weekend 11.00 Top Gear 11.30 The Game's Up 12.00 Baker and Kelly Uplift 1.00 Sport on Five 6.05 Six O'Clock News 9.00 Dailyn UK 10.00 Brief News 10.30 Asian Perspective 11.00 News Extra 12.00 After Hours 2.00 Up All Night 5.00-6.00am Morning Reports.

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Satellite

SKY 1
7.00am Orson and Olivia (59178). 7.30 George (61913). 8.00 Young Indiana Jones (52159). 9.00 Star Trek: Next Generation (45284). 10.00 Quantum Leap (67197). 11.00 Star Trek: Voyager (67197). 12.00 Wrestling (17456). 1.00 Wrestling (83284). 2.00 Kung Fu - The Legend Continues (12159). 3.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (76420). 4.00 Star Trek: Voyager (67197). 5.00 The Hit Mix (2975). 6.00 Star Trek: The Legend Continues (63420). 7.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys (34449). 8.00 Cops (2352). 8.30 Cops (18159). 9.00 Cops II (91739). 9.30 Cops III (91739). 10.00 Law and Order (59820). 11.00 Red Shoe Diaries (96284). 11.30 The Movie Show (33642). 12.00 LAPD (46050). 12.30 The Lucy Show (18163). 1.00 *Dr. Quinn, M.D.* (85227). 1.30 The Edge (70709). 2.00-6.00am Hit Mix (854044).

SKY 2
7.00am Beverly Hills, 90210 (5025284). 8.00 *Melrose Place* (5025284). 9.00 *Baywatch* (5025284). 10.00 *Baywatch* (5025284). 11.00 *Baywatch* (5025284). 12.00 *Baywatch* (5025284). 1.00 *Baywatch* (5025284). 2.00 *Baywatch* (50